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TOM BURKE OF "OURS"

COLLECTION
OF
CHARLES LEVER
BRITISH AUTHORS.

VOL. CLV.

IN THREE VOLUMES

TOM BURKE OF "OURS" BY CHARLES LEVER.

VOLUME II

IN THREE VOLUMES.

COLLECTION

OF

BRITISH AUTHORS

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TOM BURKE OF "OURS."

BY

CHARLES LEVER.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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TOM BURKE OF "OURS."

CHAPTER I.

The "Chateau."

THE same day that Beauvais left me, the court took its departure from Versailles. A sudden resolution of the consul to visit the camp at Boulogne, in which he was to be accompanied by Madame Buonaparte, was announced as the reason for this change, while a dark rumour ran, that some detected scheme for his assassination had induced his friends to advise this step. Certain it was, the preparations were made with the utmost speed, and in less than an hour after the despatch arrived from Paris the court was on its way back to the capital.

It was not without a sense of sadness that I watched the equipages as they rolled one by one from beneath the deep colonnade, and traversed the wide terrace, to disappear in the recesses of the dark forest. I strained my eyes to catch even a passing look at one, who to me had made every walk and every alley a thing to love. But I could not see her; and the last roll of the retiring wheels died away in the distance without one friendly voice to say adieu — one smile at parting.

Though I had not participated in the festivities of the chateau, nor even been noticed by any of the guests, the absence of its gay world, the glitter of its brilliant

cortège, the neighing steeds in all their bright panoply, the clank of military music, the gorgeously-dressed ladies who strolled along its terraced walks, made the solitude that followed appear dark and desolate indeed; and now, as I walked the park, whose avenues at noon-day were silent as at midnight, the desertion imparted a melancholy feeling to my heart I could not explain. How often had I stopped beneath that balcony, striving to distinguish the soft tones of one gentle voice amid the buzz of conversation! How had I watched the crowded promenade that every evening poured upon the terrace, to see one figure there among the rest! — and when my eye had fallen upon her, how has it followed and traced her as she went! And now I frequented each spot where I had ever seen her, pacing at sunset the very walk she used to take, dwelling on each word she ever spoke to me. The chateau, too, of which before I had not passed the door, I now revisited again and again, lingering in each room where I thought she had been, and even resting on the very chairs, and calling up before me her image as though present.

Thus passed over weeks and months. The summer glided into the mellow autumn, and the autumn itself grew cold and chill, with greyish skies and sighing winds that swept the leaves along the dark walks, and moaned sadly among the tall beech trees. The still, calm waters of the little lake, that reflected the bright foliage and the deep blue sky, motionless as in a mirror, was now ruffled by the passing breeze, and surged with a low sad sound against its rocky sides; and as I watched these changes, I sorrowed less for the departing season, than that every trace of her I loved was fading from before me. The bare and skeleton branches now threw

their gaunt shadows where I had seen her walk at noon-day, enveloped in deep shade. Dark, watery clouds were hurrying across the surface of the stream where I had seen her fair form mirrored. The cold winds of coming winter swept along the princely terrace, where not a zephyr rustled her dress as she moved; and somehow I could not help connecting these changes with my own sensations, and feeling that a gloomy winter was approaching to my own most cherished hopes.

Months passed over with me thus, in which, save on my round of duty, I never spoke to any one. D'Ervan did not return as he promised — a circumstance which, with all my solitude, I sincerely rejoiced at — and of Beauvais I heard nothing; and yet, on one account, I could have wished much to learn where he was. Unhappily, in the excitement of the morning I last saw him, he forgot on the table at my quarters the commission of colonel, by which he had endeavoured to tempt my ambition, and which I never noticed till several hours after his departure. Unwilling to destroy, and yet fearful of retaining it in my possession, I knew not well what to do, and had locked it up in my writing-desk, anxiously looking for an opportunity to forward it to him. None such, however, presented itself, nor did I ever hear from him from the hour he left me.

The unbroken solitude in which I lived disposed me to study, and I resumed the course which, in earlier days, had afforded me so much interest and amusement; and by this, not only was my mind drawn off from the contemplation of the painful circumstances of my own loneliness, but gradually my former ardour for military distinction came back in all its force; and thus did I learn, for the first time, how many of the griefs that

our brains beget, find their remedies in the source they spring from — the exercise of the intellect being like that of the body, an essential to a healthy state of thinking and feeling. Each day imparted fresh energy to me in the path I followed; and in these solitary hours I made those acquisitions in knowledge, which in after-life were to render me the most important services, and prepare me for the contingencies of a soldier's career.

While thus engaged, time rolled over, and already the dark and gloomy month of January set in with clouded skies and nights of storm and rain. Everything wore its most cheerless aspect. — Not only were the trees leafless and bare, the roads broken up and fissured with streams of water, but the neglected look of the chateau itself bespoke the sad and gloomy season. The closed shutters, the closely-barred doors, the statues covered up with mats to protect them from the weather, the conservatories despoiled of all their gay habitants, betrayed that the time was past when, in the warm air of sunset, happy groups wandered hither and thither, inhaling the rich odours of the flowers, and gazing on the brilliant landscape.

It was about nine o'clock at night. The storm that usually began each evening at the same hour was already stirring in fitful gusts among the bare branches of the trees, or sending a sudden plash of rain against the windows; when, as I drew closer to my fire, and was preparing to enjoy myself for the evening over my book, I heard the regular tramping sound of a cavalry horse approaching along the terrace — the jingle of the accoutrements was a noise I could not mistake. I arose, but before I reached the door I heard a deep

voice call out — “The sous-lieutenant Burke — a despatch from Paris.”

I took the paper, which was sealed and folded in the most formal manner, and returning to the room opened it. The contents ran thus: —

“Sous-lieutenant — On receipt of this you are commanded to station four dragoons of your party, with a corporal, on the road leading from Chaillot to Versailles, who shall detain all persons passing that way, unable to account satisfactorily for their presence. You will also station a picquet of two dragoons at the cross-road from the Tron to St. Cloud for the like purpose. The remainder of your party to be under arms during the night, and, if requisite, at the disposal of Captain Lepelletier. For the execution of which, the present order will be your responsibility.

(Signed)

“SAVARY,

“Colonel de Gendarmerie d'Élite.

“Given at the Tuilleries, January 14, 1804.”

So, thought I, there is then something astir after all. These precautions all indicate minute and accurate information; and now to perform my part. Just at that instant I perceived at my feet a small note, which apparently had fallen from the envelope as I opened it — I took it up. It was addressed — “Sous-lieutenant Burke,” with the words “in haste” written in the corner. Tearing it open at once I read the following: —

“All is discovered — Pichegru arrested — Moreau at the Temple. A party have left this to capture the

others at the Chateau d'Ancré; they cannot be there before midnight; you may then yet be in time to save H. de B. who is among them. Not an instant must be lost."

There was no signature to this strange epistle, but I knew at once from whom it came. Marie alone could venture on such a step to save her lover. My own determination was taken at once; should my head be on it, I'd do her bidding. While I sent for the sergeant to give him the orders of the colonel, I directed my servant to bring round my horse to the door as lightly equipped as possible, and save the holsters, nothing of his usual accoutrements. Meanwhile I prepared myself for the road by loading my pistols and fastening on my sword; the commission, too, which De Beauvais left behind, I did not forget, but taking it from my desk, I placed it safely in my bosom; nor was the brief billet omitted, which having read and re-read, I placed in the lining of my cap for safety. One difficulty still presented itself—where was the chateau, and how in the darkness of a winter's night should I find it. I just then remembered that my troop sergeant, a sharp intelligent fellow, had been for some weeks past engaged in procuring forage about the neighbourhood for several miles round. I sent for him at once and asked him if he knew it.

"Yes, lieutenant, perfectly. It was an old seigneurie once; and though much dismantled, has a look of respectability still about it. I've often been there to buy corn; but the gruff old farmer, they say, hates the military, and it's not easy to get him to deal with us at all."

"What's the distance from here?"

"Two leagues and a half, almost three — indeed you may count it as much, the road is so bad."

"Now then for the way — describe it — be as brief as you can."

"You know the cross on the high road beyond Ypres."

"I do. Proceed."

"Passing the cross and the little shrine, go forward for a mile or something more, till you come to a small cabaret on the road side, at the end of which you'll find a '*chemin de traverse*,' a clay road, which will lead you up the fields about half a league, to a large pond, where they water the cattle, cross this and continue till you see the lights of a village to your left; the barking of the dogs will guide you if the lights be out; don't enter the village, but go on till you meet an old gateway covered with ivy, enter there, and you are in the avenue of the chateau; the high road is full five leagues about, but you'll easily find this way. There's a mastiff there you should be on your guard against, though you must not fire on him either; they were going to take my life once, that I half drew a pistol from my holster against him, and I heard one of the fellows say to another, that monseigneur's dog was well worth a '*bleu*' any day, whatever he meant by that."

Very few minutes sufficed to give my orders respecting the picquet, and I was in my saddle and ready for the road; and although my departure excited no surprise among my men, coupled as it was with the orders I had just given, I overheard the troop sergeant mutter to another as I passed out — "*Parbleu*, I always suspected there was something wrong about that old

chateau yonder — come what weather it would, they'd never let you take shelter within the walls of it."

The night was so dark, that when I turned into the road I could not even distinguish my horse's head; heavy drifts of rain, too, went sweeping along, and the wind roared through the forest with a noise like the sea in a storm.

I now put spurs to my horse, and the animal fresh from long pampering, sprang forward madly, and dashed onward. The very beating of the rain, the adverse wind, seemed to chafe his spirit, and excite his courage. With head bent down, and hands firmly grasping the reins, I rode on, till the faint glimmering of a light caught my eye at a distance. A few miles brought me beside it. It was a little candle that burned in the shrine above the image of the Virgin. Some pious, but humble hand had placed it there, regardless of the rain and storm; and there it now was burning secure from the rude assaults of the harsh night, and throwing its yellow light on the few cheap trinkets which village devotion had consecrated to the beloved saint. As I looked at the little altar, I thought of the perilous enterprise I was engaged in. I could have wished my heart to have yielded to the influence of a superstition, which for every moment of life seems to have its own apt consolation and succour. For, when as way-worn travellers refresh their parched lips at some road-side well, and bless the charity that carved the little basin in the rock — so, followers of this faith have ever and anon before their eyes some *material* evidences of their church's benevolence — now arming them against the sorrows of the world — now rendering them grateful for benefits received — now taxing their selfishness by

sacrifices which elevate them in their own esteem — now comforting them by examples which make them proud of their afflictions. It is this direct appeal from the human heart to the hourly consolations of religion, that forms the great stronghold of belief in Catholic countries.

These thoughts were passing through my mind long after I left the little shrine behind me. So, said I, here must be the cabaret the sergeant spoke of, as I heard the sound of a voice issuing from a small house on the road side. For a second or two I hesitated whether I should not dismount, and ask the way; but a moment's consideration satisfied me it were better to risk nothing by delay; and cautiously advancing, I heard by the sound of my horse's feet that we had left the high road, and were now on the clay path I looked for.

Again I dashed onward at a gallop, my powerful horse splashing through the deep ground, or striding boldly across the heavy furrows: now breasting some steep and rugged ascent, where the torn-up way gave passage to a swollen rivulet; now plunging down into some valley, where the darkness seemed thicker and more impenetrable still. At last I could see, far down beneath me, the twinkling light of the village, and began to deliberate with myself at what point I should turn off leftwards. Each moment the path seemed to lead me in the direction of the light, while I felt that my road led onwards straight. I drew my rein to deliberate what course I should take, when directly in front of me I thought I could detect the clank of a sabre flapping against the flank of a horse. I lowered my head on a level with my horse's mane, and could

now distinctly hear the sound I suspected, and more still, the deep tones of a soldier's voice interrogating some one, who, by the *patois* of his answer, I guessed to be a peasant.

"You are certain, then, we have not come wrong?" said the horseman.

"Ah! I know the way too well for that — travelling it daylight and dark since I was a boy. I was born in the village below. We shall soon reach the little wooden bridge, and then, turning to the left, beside Martin Guichard's —"

"What care I for all that?" interrupted the other, roughly. "How far are we now from the chateau? Is it still a league off?"

"*Parbleu!* — No! nor the half of it. When you rise the hill yonder, you'll see a light; they always have one burning in the tourelle there — and that's the chateau."

"Thank heaven for that," muttered I; "and now only let me pass them, and all's safe." The figures before me, whom I could now dimly trace in the darkness, were descending step by step a rugged and narrow path, where a tall hedge formed a wall on either side. To get before them here, therefore, was out of the question; my only chance was by a *détour* through the fields to come down upon the village, and, if possible, gain the bridge he spoke of before them. Quick as the thought, I turned from the deep road to the still deeper earth of the ploughed field beside it. My horse — a strong and powerful Norman — needed but the slightest movement of the hand to plunge hotly on. My eyes bent upon the twinkle of the few lights that still marked the little hamlet, I rode fearlessly forward:

now tearing madly through some low ozier fence — now slipping in the wet and plashy soil, where each stride threatened to bring us both to the earth. The descent became soon almost precipitous; but the deep ground gave a footing, and I never slackened my speed. At length, with a crashing sound I found that we had burst the little enclosure of some village garden, and could dimly trace the outline of a cottage at some distance in front. Dismounting now, I felt my way cautiously for the path that usually conducts at the end of the cabin to the garden: this I soon made out, and the next minute was in the street. Happily, the storm, which raged still as violently as before, suffered no one to be without doors; and save the rare glimmer of a light, all was sunk in darkness.

I walked on beside my horse for some minutes, and at last I heard the rushing sound of a swollen river, as it tore along in its narrow bed; and approaching step by step discovered the little bridge, which simply consisted of two planks, unprotected by any railing at either side. With a little difficulty I succeeded in leading my horse across, and was just about to mount, when the sound of the trooper's voice from the village street again reached me.

A sudden thought flashed through my mind. — Each moment might now be precious: and stooping down, I lifted the end of the plank, and sent it with a crash into the stream; the other soon followed it; and before I was in my saddle again the torrent was carrying them along amid the rocks of the stream.

“Here is a misfortune,” cried the peasant, in a tone of misery — “the bridge has been carried away by the flood.”

"*Tonnerre de ciel!* and is there no other way across," said the dragoon, in a voice of passion.

I waited not to hear more, but giving the spur to my horse, dashed up the steep bank, and the next moment saw the light of the chateau, for such I guessed to be a bright star that twinkled at a distance. Speed now will do it, said I, and put my strong Norman to his utmost. The wind tore past me scarce faster than I went, while the beating rain came round me. The footway soon altered, and I found that we were crossing a smooth turf like a lawn. Ha! this is the old gate, thought I, as a tall archway, overhung with ivy and closed by a strong door, opposed further progress. I beat loudly against it with the heavy handle of my whip, but to no purpose; the hoarse voice of the storm drowned all such sounds. I dismounted, and endeavoured to make myself heard by knocking with a large stone. I shouted, I cried aloud, but all in vain. My terror increased every instant. What was to be done? The dragoon might arrive at any moment, and then I myself must share the ruin of the others. Maddened by the emergency that each moment grew more pressing, I sprung into the saddle, and, following the direction of the wall, rode round to the other side of the chateau, seeking some open spot, some break whereby to enter.

I had not gone far, when I saw a portion of the wall which, broken and dilapidated, afforded the opportunity I desired. I hesitated not, but dashed wildly at it. My horse, unaccustomed to such an effort, chested the barrier, and came rolling headforemost to the earth, throwing me several yards before him. A cry of pain escaped me as I fell; and I scarcely could gain my knees to rise, when the hoarse bay of a savage dog

broke upon my ear, and I heard the animal tearing through the brushwood towards me. I drew my sabre in a trice, and, scarce knowing at what side to defend myself, laid wildly about me, while I shouted with all my might for help. The furious beast sprung like a tiger at my throat, and, though wounded by a chance cut, seized me in his terrible fangs: fortunately the strong collar of my uniform served to protect me; but the violence of the assault carried me off my balance, and we rolled one over the other to the ground. Grasping his throat with both hands I endeavoured to strangle him, while he vainly sought to reach my face. At this critical moment my cries were heard within, and numerous lights flitted up and down in front of the chateau, and a crowd of persons, all armed, were quickly about me. Seizing the dog by his collar, a peasant tore him away; while another, holding a lantern to my face, cried out in a voice of terror, "They are upon us. We are lost."

"*Parbleu!* you should let Colbert finish his work — he is a 'blue:' they are but food for dogs any day."

"Not so," said another, in a low determined voice; "this is a surer weapon."

I heard the cock of a pistol click as he spoke.

"Halt there! — Stop! I say," cried a voice, in a tone of command. "I know him — I know him well. It's Burke. Is it not?"

It was De Beauvais spoke, while at the same moment he knelt down beside me on the grass, and put his arm round my neck. I whispered one word into his ear. He sprang to his feet, and, with a hasty direction to assist me towards the house, disappeared. Before I could reach the door he was again beside me.

"And you did this to save me, dear friend?" said he, in a voice half stifled with sobs. "You have run all this danger for my sake?"

I did not dare to take the merit of an act I had no claim to, still less to speak of her for whose sake I risked my life, and leaned on him without speaking, as he led me within the porch.

"Sit down here for a moment—but one moment," said he, in a whisper, "and I'll return to you."

I sat down upon a bench, and looked about me. The place had all the evidence of being one of consequence in former days: the walls, wainscotted in dark walnut wood, were adorned with grotesque carvings of hunting scenes and instruments of "venerie;" the ceiling, in the same taste, displayed trophies of weapons, intermingled with different emblems of the "chasse," while in the centre, and enclosed within a garter, were the royal arms of the Bourbons: the gilding that once shone on them was tarnished and faded; the *fleur de lys*, too, were broken and dilapidated, while but a stray letter of the proud motto remained, as if not willing to survive the downfall of those on whom it was now less a boast than a sarcasm. As I sat thus, the wide hall was gradually filled with men, whose anxious and excited faces betokened the fears my presence had excited, while not one ventured to speak or address a word to me. Most of them were armed with cutlasses, and some carried pistols in belts round their waists; while others had rude pikes, whose coarse fashion betokened the handiwork of a village-smith. They stood in a semicircle round me; and while their eyes were rivetted upon me with an expression of most piercing interest,

not a syllable was spoken. Suddenly a door was opened at the end of a corridor, and Beauvais called out —

“This way, Burke — come this way.”

CHAPTER II.

“The Chateau d’Ancre.”

BEFORE I had time to collect myself I was hurried on by Beauvais into a room, when, the moment I had entered, the door was closed and locked behind me. By the light of a coarse and rudely-formed chandelier that occupied the middle of a table, I saw a party of near a dozen persons who sat around it—the head of the board being filled by one, whose singular appearance attracted all my attention. He was a man of enormous breadth of chest and shoulders, with a lofty massive head, on either side of which a quantity of red hair fell in profusion; a beard of the same colour descended far on his bosom, which, with his overhanging eyebrows, imparted a most savage and ferocious expression to features, which of themselves were harsh and repulsive. Though he wore a blouse in peasant fashion, it was easy to see that he was not of the lower walk of society. Across his brawny chest a broad belt of black leather passed, to support a strong straight sword, the heavy hilt of which peeped above the arm of his chair. A pair of handsomely-mounted pistols lay before him on the table; and the carved handle of a poniard could be seen projecting slightly from the breast-pocket of his vest. Of the rest who were about him, I had but time to perceive that they were peasants — but all well armed, and most of them wearing a knot of white ribbon at the breast of their blouses.

Every eye was turned towards me, as I stood at the foot of the table astonished and speechless — while De Beauvais quitting my arm, hastened to the large man's side, and whispered some words in his ear. He rose slowly from his chair, and in a moment each face was turned to him. Speaking in a deep guttural tone, he addressed them for some minutes in a patois of which I was totally ignorant — every word he uttered seemed to stir their very hearts, if I were to judge from the short and heavy respiration — the deep-drawn breath — the flushed faces and staring eyes around me. More than once, some allusion seemed made to me — at least, they turned simultaneously to look at me: once, too, at something he said, each man carried his hand round to his sword-hilt, but dropped it again, listlessly, as he continued. The discourse over, the door was unlocked, and one by one they left the room, each man saluting the speaker with a reverence as he passed out. De Beauvais closed the door, and barred it, as the last man disappeared, and then turning hastily round, called out: —

“What now?”

The large man bent his head down between his hands, and spoke not in reply — then suddenly springing up, he said —

“Take my horse, he is fresh, and ready for the road, and make for Quille-bœuf: the ford at Montgorge will be swollen — but he'll take the stream for you; — at the farmer's house, that looks over the river, you can stop.”

“I know it, I know it,” said Beauvais; “but what of you, are you to remain behind?”

“I'll go with him,” said he, pointing towards me. “As his companion, I can reach the Bois de Boulogne —

in any case, as his prisoner—once there, you may trust me for the rest.”

De Beauvais looked at me for a reply—I hesitated what to say, and at last said: “For your sake, Henri de Beauvais, and yours only, have I ventured on a step, which may, in all likelihood, be my ruin. I neither know, nor wish to know, your plans—nor will I associate myself with any one, be he who he may, in your enterprise.”

“Jacques Tisserend, the tanner,” continued the large man, as if not heeding nor caring for my interruption, “will warn Armand de Polignac of what has happened—and Charles de la Revière had better remain near Biville for the English cutter—she’ll lie off the coast to-morrow or next day. Away—lose not a moment.”

“And my dear friend here,” said Beauvais, turning to me, “who has risked his very life to rescue me, shall I leave him thus?”

“Can you save him by remaining?” said the other, as he coolly examined the priming of his pistols. “We shall all escape, if you but be quick.”

A look from Beauvais drew me towards him, when he threw his arms around my neck, and in a low broken voice, muttered—“When I tell you, that all I lived for, exists to me no longer—the love I sought, refused me—my dearest ambition thwarted—you will not think that a selfish desire for life prompts me now; but a solemn oath, to obey the slightest command of that man, sworn before my sovereign, binds me, and I must not break it.”

“Away, away, I hear voices at the gate below,” cried the other.

“Adieu! adieu for ever,” said Beauvais, as he kissed

my cheek, and sprang through a small doorway in the wainscot, which closed after him as he went.

“Now, for our movements,” said the large man, unhooking a cloak that hung against the wall. “You must tie my hands with this cord, in such a way, that although seemingly secure, I can free myself at a moment — place me on a horse, a fast one too, beside you — and order your troopers to ride in front and rear of us. When we reach the Bois de Boulogne, leave the allée de Chasseurs, and turn towards St. Cloud. *Tonnerre de ciel*, they’re firing yonder!” An irregular discharge of small arms, followed by a wild cheer, rung out above the sound of the storm. “Again, did you hear that? there are the carbines of cavalry — I know their ring. Accursed dogs, that would not do my bidding,” cried he, stamping with passion on the ground, while throwing off his blouse, he stuck his pistols in a belt around his waist, and prepared for mortal combat. Meanwhile, pistol shots mingled with savage shouts and wild hurras, were heard approaching nearer and nearer — and at length a loud knocking at the front door, with a cry of “they’re here — they’re here.”

The large man, now fully armed, and with his drawn sword in his hand, unlocked the door. The passage without was full of armed peasants, silent and watchful for his commands. A few words in the former patois seemed sufficient to convey them, and their answer was a cheer that made the walls ring.

The chief moved rapidly from place to place through the crowds, who, at his bidding, broke into parties — some of them occupied doorways which enfiladed the hall — others knelt down, to suffer some to fire above their heads — here were two posted, armed with hatchets,

at the very entrance itself — and six of the most determined-looking were to dispute the passage with their muskets. Such was the disposition of the force, when suddenly the light was extinguished, and all left in utter darkness — the deep breathing of their anxious breasts alone marked their presence — when, without door, the sounds of strife gradually died away, and the storm alone was heard.

As for me, I leaned against a doorway, my arms folded on my bosom, my head sunk — while I prayed for death, the only exit I could see to my dishonour.

There was a terrible pause — the very hurricane seemed to abate its violence, and only the heavy rain was heard as it fell in torrents — when, with a loud crash, the door in front was burst open, and fell with a bang upon the floor — not a word from those within, not a motion betrayed their presence, while the whispered tones of a party without showed that the enemy was there. “Bring up the torches quickly here,” called out a voice like that of an officer; and as he spoke, the red flare of lighted pine branches was seen moving through the misty atmosphere. The light fell upon a strong party of dismounted dragoons and gendarmerie, who, carbine in hand, stood waiting for the word to dash forward. The officer, whose figure I could distinguish as he moved along the front of his men, appeared to hesitate, and for a few seconds all stood motionless. At length, as if having resolved on his plan, he approached the doorway, a pine torch in his hand — another step, and the light must have disclosed the dense array of armed peasants that stood and knelt around the hall — when a deep, low voice within uttered the one word — “now:” and quick, as if by his breath the powder had

been ignited, a volley rang out, pattering like hail on the steel breast-plates, and through the branches of the trees — a mingled shout of rage and agony rose from those without, and without waiting for a command they rushed onward. The peasants, who had not time to re-load their pieces, clubbed them in their strong hands, and laid wildly about them. The fight was now hand to hand — for, narrow as was the doorway, some three or four dragoons pressed every moment in, and gradually the hall became a dense mass of indiscriminate combatants. The large man fought like one possessed, and cleft his way towards the entrance with a long straight dagger, as if regardless of friends or foes. “*A moi! à moi!*” cried a tall and powerful man, as he sprang at his throat, “this is he;” the words were his last, as, stabbed to the very heart, he sprang backward in his death agony — but at the moment, a perfect shower of bullets rattled around the large man, one of which alone took effect in his shoulder. Still he strove onwards, and at last, with a spring like a savage tiger, he lowered his head, and bounded clean out into the court. Scarcely, however, had his foot touched the wet grass, when he slipped forward, and fell heavily on his back. A dozen swords flashed above him as he lay, and only by the most immense efforts of the officer, was he spared death in a hundred wounds. The defeat of their leader seemed to subdue all the daring courage of his party: the few who were able to escape, dashed hither and thither, through passages and doorways they were well acquainted with; while the flagged floor was bathed in blood from the rest, as they lay in mangled and frightful forms, dead and dying on every side.

Like one in some dreadful dream, I stood spectator

of this savage strife, wishing that some stray bullet had found my heart, yet ashamed to die with such a stain upon my honour. I crossed my arms before my breast, and waited for my doom. Two gendarmes passed quickly to and fro with torches, examining the faces and looks of those who were still likely to live, when suddenly one of them cried out, as he stood before me—

“What’s this? An officer of hussars here!”

The exclamation brought an officer to the spot, who, holding a lantern to my face, said quickly—

“How is this, Sir?—how came you here?”

“Here is my sword, Sir,” said I, drawing it from the scabbard. “I place myself under arrest. In another place, and to other judges, I must explain my conduct.”

“*Parbleu!* Jacques,” said the officer, addressing another who sat, while his wounds were being bound up, on a chair near, “this affair is worse than we thought of. Here’s one of the “*huitième*” in the thick of it.”

“I hope, Sir,” said I, addressing the young man, whose arm was bleeding profusely from a sabre wound—
“I hope, Sir, your wound may not be of consequence.”

He looked up suddenly, and, while a smile of the most insulting sarcasm curled his bloodless lip, answered—

“I thank you, Sir, for your sympathy; but you must forgive me if, one of those days, I cannot bandy consolations with you.”

“You are right, lieutenant,” said a dragoon, who lay bleeding from a dreadful cut in the forehead. “I’d not exchange places with him myself this minute for all his epaulettes.”

With an overwhelming sense of my own degraded

position, when to such taunts as these I dared not reply, I stood mute and confounded. Meantime the soldiers were engaged in collecting together the scattered weapons, fastening the wrists of the prisoners with cords, and ransacking the house for such proofs of the conspiracy as might criminate others at a distance. By the time these operations were concluded, the day began to break, and I could distinguish in the court-yard several large covered carts or *charrettes* destined to convey the prisoners. One of these was given up entirely to the chief, who, although only slightly wounded, would never assist himself in the least, but lay a heavy inert mass, suffering the others to lift him and place him in the cart. Such as were too badly wounded to be moved were placed in a room in the chateau, a guard being left over them.

A sergeant of the gendarmerie now approached me as I stood, and commenced, without a word to examine me for any papers or documents that might be concealed about my person.

"You are in error," said I quietly. "I have nothing of what you suspect."

"Do you call this nothing?" interrupted he triumphantly, as he drew forth the parchment commission I had placed in my bosom, and forgot to restore to Beauvais. "*Parbleu!* you'd have had a better memory had your plans succeeded."

"Give it here," said an officer, as he saw the sergeant devouring the document with his eyes. "Ah!" cried he, starting, "he was playing a high stake, too. Let him be closely secured."

While the orders of the officer were being followed up, the various prisoners were secured in the carts,

mounted dragoons stationed at either side, their carbines held unslung in their hands. At last my turn came, and I was ordered to mount into a *charrette* with two gendarmes, whose orders respecting any effort at escape on my part were pretty clearly indicated by the position of two pistols carried at either side of me.

A day of heavy, unremitting rain, without any wind or storm, succeeded to the night of tempest. Dark inky clouds lay motionless near the earth, whose surface became blacker by the shadow. A weighty and louring atmosphere added to the gloom I felt; and neither in my heart within, nor in the world without, could I find one solitary consolation.

At first I dreaded lest my companions should address me: a single question would have wrung my very soul; but happily they maintained a rigid silence — nor did they even speak to each other during the entire journey. At noon we halted at a small road-side *cabaret*, where refreshments were provided, and relays of horses in waiting, and again set out on our way. The day was declining when we reached the Bois de Boulogne, and entered the long avenue that leads to the Barrière de l'Etoile. The heavy wheels moved noiselessly over the even turf; and, save the jingle of the troopers' equipments, all was hushed. For above an hour we had proceeded thus, when a loud shout in front, followed by a pistol shot, and then three or four others quickly after it, halted the party; and I could mark through the uncertain light the mounted figures dashing wildly here and there, and plunging into the thickest of the wood.

"Look to the prisoners!" cried an officer, as he galloped down the line; and at the word every man

seized his carbine, and held himself on the alert. Meanwhile the whole cavalcade was halted, and I could see that something of consequence had occurred in front, though of what nature I could not even guess. At last a sergeant of the gendarmes rode up to our side splashed and heated.

"Has he escaped?" cried one of the men beside me.

"Yes!" said he, with an oath, "the brigand has got away, though how he cut the cords on his wrists, or by what means he sprung from the *charrette* to the road, the devil must answer. Ha! there they are firing away after him. The only use of their powder is to show the fellow where they are."

"I would not change places with our captain this evening," cried one of the gendarmerie. "Returning to Paris without the red beard —"

"*Ma foi!* you're not wrong there. It will be a heavy reckoning for him with dark Savary; and as to taking a Breton in a wood —"

The word to march interrupted the colloquy, and again we moved forward.

By some strange sympathy I cannot account for, I felt glad that the chief had made his escape. The gallantry of his defence, the implicit obedience yielded him by the others, had succeeded in establishing an interest for him in my mind; and the very last act of daring courage, by which he effected his liberty, increased the feeling. By what an easy transition, too, do we come to feel for those whose fate has any similarity with our own. The very circumstance of common misfortune is a binding link; and thus I was not without an anxious hope that the chief might succeed in his escape, though,

had I known his intrigue or his intentions, such interest had scarcely found a place in my heart.

Such reflections as these led me to think how great must be the charm to the human mind of overcoming difficulty or confronting danger, when even for those of whom we know nothing, we can feel, and feel warmly, when they stand before us in such a light as this. Heroism and bravery appeal to every nature; and bad must be the cause in which they are exerted, before we can venture to think ill of those who possess them.

The lamps were beginning to be lighted as we reached the Barrière, and halted to permit the officer of the party to make his report of who we were. The formality soon finished, we defiled along the Boulevard, followed by a crowd that, increasing each moment, at last occupied the entire road, and made our progress slow and difficult. While the curiosity of the people to catch sight of the prisoners demanded all the vigilance of the guards to prevent, a sad and most appalling stillness pervaded the whole multitude, and I could hear a murmur as they went, that it was Generals Moreau and Pichegru who were taken. At length we halted, and I could see that the foremost *charrette* was entering a low archway, over which a massive portcullis hung. The gloomy shadow of a dark vast mass, that rose against the inky sky, loomed above the wall, and somehow seemed to me as if well known.

"This is the 'Temple,'" said I to the gendarme on my right.

A nod was the reply, and a half expressive look that seemed to say, "In that word you have said your destiny."

About two years previous to the time I now speak of, I remember one evening, when returning from a solitary walk along the Boulevard, stopping in front of a tall and weather-beaten tower, the walls black with age, and pierced here and there with narrow windows, across which strong iron stanchions ran transversely. A gloomy fosse, crossed by a narrow drawbridge, surrounded the external wall of this dreary building, which needed no superstition to invest it with a character of crime and misfortune. This was the Temple, the ancient castle of the knights whose cruelties were written in the dark *oubliettes* and the noisome dungeons of that dread abode. A terrace ran along the tower on three sides. There, for hours long, walked in sadness and in sorrow the last of France's kings, Louis XVI., his children at his side. In that dark turret the dauphin suffered death. At the low casement yonder, Madame Royale sat hour by hour, the stone on which she leaned wet with her tears. The place was one of gloomy and sinister repute: the neighbourhood spoke of the heavy roll of carriages that passed the drawbridge at the dead of night, of strange sounds and cries, of secret executions, and even of tortures that were inflicted there. Of these dreadful missions a corps called the "gendarmes d'élite" were vulgarly supposed the chosen executors, and their savage looks and repulsive exterior gave credibility to the surmise, while some affirmed that the Mameluke guard the consul had brought back with him from Egypt, had no other function than the murder of the prisoners confined there.

Little thought I then, that in a few brief months I should pass beneath that black portcullis a prisoner. Little did I anticipate, as I wended my homeward way,

my heart heavy and my step slow, that the day was to come when, in my own person, I was to feel the sorrows over which I then wept for others.

CHAPTER III.

The "Temple."

THIS was the second morning of my life which opened in the narrow cell of a prison; and when I awoke and looked upon the bare, bleak walls, the barred window, the strongly-bolted door, I thought of the time when, as a boy, I slept within the walls of Newgate. The same sad sounds were now about me; the measured tread of sentinels; the tramp of patrols; the cavernous clank of door-closing, and the grating noise of locking and unlocking heavy gates, and then that dreary silence more depressing than all, how they came back upon me now, seeming to wipe out all space, and bring me to the hours of my boyhood's trials. Yet what were they to this? what were the dangers I then incurred to the inevitable ruin now before me? True I knew neither the conspirators nor their crime; but who would believe it? How came I among them? Dare I tell it, and betray her whose honour was dearer to me than my life? Yet it was hard to face death in such a cause; no sense of high though unsuccessful daring to support me; no strongly-roused passion to warm my blood, and teach me bravely to endure a tarnished name. Disgrace and dishonour were all my portion, in that land, too, where I once hoped to win fame and glory, and make for myself a reputation among the first and greatest. The deep roll of a drum, followed by the harsh turning of keys in the locks along the

corridor interrupted my sad musings; and the next minute my door was unbolted, and an official, dressed in the uniform of the prison, presented himself before me.

"Ah! Monsieur, awake and dressed already!" said he in a gay and smiling tone, for which the place had not prepared me. "At eight we breakfast here; at nine you are free to promenade in the garden or on the terrace, at least all who are not *en secret*; and I have to felicitate Monsieur on that pleasure."

"How then; I am not a prisoner?"

"Yes, *parbleu!* you are a prisoner, but not under such heavy imputation as to be confined apart. All in this quarter enjoy a fair share of liberty: live together; walk, chat, read the papers; and have an easy time of it: but you shall judge for yourself. Come along with me."

In a strange state of mingled hope and fear I followed the gaoler along the corridor, and across a paved court-yard into a low hall, where basins and other requisites for a prison toilet were arranged around the walls. Passing through this we ascended a narrow stair, and finally entered a large, well-lighted room, along which a table, plentifully but plainly provided, extended the entire length. The apartment was crowded with persons of every age and apparently every condition, all conversing noisily and eagerly together, and evidencing as little seeming restraint as though within the walls of a café.

Seated at table, I could not help feeling amused at the strange medley of rank and country about me. Here were old *militaires* with bushy beards and moustachios side by side with ruddy-faced peasants, whose long, yellow locks bespoke them of Norman blood; hard, weather-beaten sailors from the coast of Bretagne, talk-

ing familiarly with venerable seigneurs in all the pomp of powder and a queue; priests with shaven crowns; young fellows, whose easy looks of unabashed effrontery betrayed the careless Parisian: all were mingled up together, and yet not one among the number did I see whose appearance denoted sorrow for his condition or anxiety for his fate.

The various circumstances of their imprisonment, the imputation they lay under, the acts of which they were accused, formed the topics of conversation in common with the gossip of the town, the news of the theatres, and the movements in political life. Never was there a society with less restraint: each man knew his neighbour's history too well to make concealment of any value, and frankness seemed the order of the day. While I was initiating myself into so much of the habit of the place, a large, fat, florid personage, who sat at the head of the table, called out to me for my name.

"The governor desires to have your name and rank for his list," said my neighbour at the right hand.

Having given the required information, I could not help expressing my surprise how, in the presence of the governor of the prison, they ventured to speak so freely.

"Ha!" said the person I addressed, "he is not the governor of the Temple; that's merely a title we have given him among ourselves. The office is held always by the oldest *détenu*. Now he has been here ten months, and succeeded to the throne about a fortnight since. The abbé yonder, with the silk scarf round his waist, will be his successor in a few days."

"Indeed! Then he will be at liberty so soon. I thought he seemed in excellent spirits."

"Not much, perhaps, on that score," replied he. "His sentence is hard labour for life at the Bagnes de Toulon."

I started back with horror, and could not utter a word.

"The abbé," continued my informant, "would be right happy to take his sentence. But the governor is speaking to you."

"Monsieur le sous-lieutenant," said the governor in a deep, solemn accent, "I have the honour to salute you, and bid you welcome to the Temple in the name of my respectable and valued friends here about me. We rejoice to possess one of your cloth amongst us. The last was, if I remember aright, the Captain De Lorme, who boasted he could hit the consul at sixty paces with a pistol bullet."

"*Pardieu*, governor," said a handsome man in a braided frock, "we had Ducaisne since."

"So we had, commandant," said the governor bowing politely, "and a very pleasant fellow he was; but he only stopped one night here."

"A single night! I remember it well," grunted out a thick-lipped, rosy-faced little fellow near the bottom of the table. "You'll meet him soon, governor; he's at Toulon. Pray present my respects—"

"A fine, a fine," shouted out a dozen voices in a breath.

"I deny it, I deny it," replied the rosy-faced man, rising from his chair. "I appeal to the governor if I am not innocent. I ask him if there were any thing which could possibly offend his feelings in my allusion

to Toulon; whither for the benefit of his precious health he is about to repair."

"Yes," replied the governor solemnly, "you are fined three francs. I always preferred Brest. Toulon is not to my taste."

"Pay, pay," cried out the others, while a pewter dish, on which some twenty pieces of money were lying, was passed down the table.

"And to resume," said the governor turning towards me: "the secretary will wait on you after breakfast to receive the fees of initiation, and such information as you desire to afford him for your coming amongst us, both being perfectly discretionary with you. He who desires the privilege of our amiable re-union soon learns the conditions on which to obtain it. The enjoyments of our existence here are cheap at any price. Le Père D'Oigny yonder will tell you life is short: very few here are likely to dispute the assertion; and perhaps the Abbé Thomas may give you a strong hint how to make the best of it."

"*Parbleu*, governor, you forget the Père left us this morning."

"True, true; how my memory is failing me. The dear abbé did leave us, sure enough."

"Where for?" said I in a whisper.

"La Plaine de Grenelle," said the person beside me in a low tone. "He was guillotined at five o'clock."

A sick shudder ran through me; and though the governor continued his oration, I heard not a word he spoke, nor could I arouse myself from the stupor until the cheers of the party at the conclusion of the harangue awoke me.

"The morning looks fine enough for a walk," said the man beside me. "What say you to the gardens?"

I followed him without speaking across the court, and down a flight of stone steps into a large, open space planted tastefully with trees, and adorned by a beautiful fountain. Various walks and alleys traversed the garden in every direction, along which parties were to be seen walking; some laughing; some reading aloud the morning papers; but all engaged, and, to all seeming, pleasantly. Yet did their reckless indifference to life, their horrible carelessness of each other's fate, seem to me far more dreadful than any expression of sorrow, however painful, and I shrunk from them as though the contamination of their society might impart that terrible state of unfeeling apathy they were given up to. Even guilt itself had seemed less repulsive than this shocking and unnatural recklessness. Pondering thus, I hurried from the crowded path, and sought a lonely, unfrequented walk which led along the wall of the garden. I had not proceeded far when the low, but solemn notes of church music struck on my ear. I hastened forward and soon perceived through the branches of a beech hedge a party of some sixteen or eighteen persons kneeling on the grass, their hands lifted as if in prayer, while they joined in a psalm tune, one of those simple but touching airs which the peasantry of the south are so attached to. Their oval faces, bronzed with the sun; their long, flowing hair divided on the head, and falling loose on either shoulder; their dark eyes and long lashes bespoke them all from that land of Bourbon loyalty — *La Vendée*; even had not their yellow jackets, covered with buttons along the sleeves, and their loose hose, evinced their nationality. Many of the counte-

nances I now remembered to have seen the preceding night; but some were care-worn and emaciated, as if from long imprisonment.

I cannot tell how the simple piety of these poor peasants touched me, contrasted too with the horrible indifference of the others. As I approached them, I was recognised; and whether supposing that I was a well-wisher to their cause, or attracted merely by the tie of common misfortune, they saluted me respectfully, and seemed glad to see me. While two or three of those I had seen before moved forward to speak to me, I remarked that a low, swarthy man, with a scar across his upper lip, examined me with marked attention, and then whispered something to the rest. At first he seemed to pay little respect to whatever they said — an incredulous shake of the head, or an impatient motion of the hand, replying to their observations. Gradually, however, he relaxed in this, and I could see that his stern features assumed a look of kinder meaning.

“So, friend,” said he, holding out his tanned and powerful hand towards me, “it was thou saved our chief from being snared like a wolf in a trap. *Le bon Dieu* will remember the service hereafter; and the good king will not forget thee, if the time ever comes for his better fortune.”

“You must not thank me,” said I, smiling: “the service I rendered was one instigated by friendship only. I know not your plans; I never knew them. The epaulette I wear I never was false to.”

A murmur of dissatisfaction ran along the party, and I could mark that in the words they interchanged, feelings of surprise were mingled with displeasure. At last, the short man, commanding silence with a slight

motion of the hand, said, "I am sorry for it; your courage merited a better cause; however, the avowal was at least an honest one; and now tell us, why came you here?"

"For the very reason I've mentioned: my presence at the chateau last night, and my discovery during the attack, were enough to impute guilt. How can I clear myself, without criminating those I would not name?"

"That matters but little. Doubtless, you have powerful friends—rich ones, perhaps, and in office: they will bear you harmless."

"Alas! you are wrong. I have not in all the length and breadth of France one who, if a word would save me from the scaffold, would care to speak it. I am a stranger and an alien."

"Ha!" said a fair-haired, handsome youth, starting from the grass where he had been sitting, "what would I not give now your lot was mine. They'd not make my heart tremble, if I could forget the cabin I was born in."

"Hush! Philippe," said the other, "the weapon is not in their armoury to make a Vendean tremble—but, hark! there is the drum for the inspection. You must present yourself each day, at noon, at the low postern yonder, and write your name; and mark me, before we part, it cannot serve *us*, it may ruin *you*, if we are seen to speak together. Trust no one here. Those whom you see yonder are half of them but '*moutons*.'"

"How," said I, not understanding the phrase.

"Ay, it was a prison word I used," resumed he. "I would say they are but spies of the police, who, as if confined for their offences, are only here to obtain confessions from unguarded, unsuspecting prisoners."

Their frankness and sincerity are snares that have led many to the guillotine: beware of them. You dare not carry your glass to your lip, but the murmured toast might be your condemnation. Adieu!" said he; and as he spoke, he turned away and left the place, followed by the rest.

The disgust I felt at first for the others was certainly not lessened by learning that their guilt was stained by treachery the blackest that can disgrace humanity; and now, as I walked among them, it was with a sense of shrinking horror I recoiled from the very touch of the wretches, whose smiles were but lures to the scaffold.

"Ha! our lost and strayed friend," said one, as I appeared — "come hither and make a clean breast of it. What amiable weaknesses have introduced you to the Temple!"

"In truth," said I, endeavouring to conceal my knowledge of my acquaintances' real character, "I cannot even guess, nor do I believe, that any one else is wiser than myself."

"*Parbleu!* young gentleman," said the abbé, as he spied me impertinently through his glass, "you are excessively old-fashioned for your years. Don't you know that spotless innocence went out with the Bourbons? Every one since that dies in the glorious assertion of his peculiar wickedness, with certain extenuating circumstances which he calls human nature."

"And now then," resumed the first speaker, "for your mishap — what was it?"

"I should only deceive you were I to give any other answer than my first. Mere suspicion there may be against me — there can be no more."

"Well, well, let us have the suspicions. The *Moniteur* is late this morning, and we have nothing to amuse us."

"Who are you?" cried another, a tall, insolent-looking fellow, with a dark moustache. "That's the first question. I've seen a '*mouton*' in a hussar dress before now."

"I am too late a resident here," answered I, "to guess how far insolence goes unpunished; but if I were outside these walls, and you also, I'd teach you a lesson you have yet to learn, Sir."

"*Parbleu!*" said one of the former speakers, "Jacques, he has you there, though it was no great sharpness to see you were a blanc-bec."

The tall fellow moved away, muttering to himself, as a hearty laugh broke forth among the rest.

"And now," said the abbé, with a simper, "pardon the liberty; but have you had any trifling inducement for coming to pass a few days here? Were you making love to Madame la Consulesse? or did you laugh at General Buonaparte's grand dinners? or have you been learning the English grammar? or what was it?"

I shook my head, and was silent.

"Come, come, be frank with us: unblemished virtue fares very ill here. There was a gentleman lost his head this morning, who never did any thing all his life, other than keep the post-office at Tarbes; but somehow, he happened to let a letter pass into the bag, addressed to an elderly gentleman in England, called the Count D'Artois, not knowing that the count's letters are always 'to the care of Citizen Buonaparte.' Well, they shortened him by the neck for it. Cruel! you will say; but so much for innocence."

“For the last time then, gentlemen, I must express my sincere sorrow that I have neither murder, treason, nor any other infamy on my conscience, which might qualify me for the distinguished honour of associating with you. Such being the case, and my sense of my deficiency being so great, you will, I’m sure, pardon me, if I do not obtrude on society of which I am unworthy, and which I have now the honour to wish a good-day to;” with this, and a formal bow, returned equally politely by the rest, I moved on, and entered the tower.

Sombre and sad as were my own reflections, yet did I prefer their company to that of my fellow-prisoners for whom already I began to conceive a perfect feeling of abhorrence.

Revolted, indeed, was the indifference to fame, honour, and even life, which I already witnessed among them; but what was it compared with the deliberate treachery of men who could wait for the hour when the heart, overflowing with sorrow, opened itself for consolation and comfort, and then search its every recess for proofs of guilt that should bring the mourner to the scaffold.

How any government could need — how they could tolerate such assassins as these, I could not conceive. And was this *his* doing — were these *his* minions, whose high-souled chivalry had been my worship and my idolatry? No, no; I’ll not believe it. Buonaparte knows not the dark and terrible secrets of these gloomy walls. The hero of Arcola, the conqueror of Italy, wots not of the frightful tyranny of those dungeons: did he but know them, what a destiny would wait on

those who thus stain with crime and treachery the fame of that "Belle France" he made so great.

Oh! that in the hour of my accusation — in the very last of my life, were it on the step of the guillotine, I could but speak with words to reach him, and say, how glory like his must be tarnished, if such deeds went on unpunished; that while thousands and thousands were welcoming his path with cries of wild enthusiasm and joy, in the cold cells of the Temple there were breaking hearts, whose sorrow-wrung confessions were registered — whose prayers were canvassed for evidences of desires, that might be converted into treason. He could have no sympathy with men like these: not such the brave who followed him at Lodi; not kindred souls were they who died for him at Marengo. Alas! alas! how might men read of him hereafter, if by such acts the splendour of his greatness was to suffer stain. While thoughts like these filled my mind, and in the excitement of awakened indignation, I trod my little cell backwards and forwards, the gaoler entered, and, having locked the door behind him, approached me. "You are the Sous-lieutenant Burke: is it not so? Well, I have a letter for you; I promised to deliver it on the one condition only — which is, that when read, you shall tear it in pieces: were it known that I did this, my head would roll in the Plaine de Grenelle before daybreak to-morrow. I also promised to put you on your guard: speak to few here; confide in none; and now here is your letter."

I opened the billet hastily, and read the few lines it contained, which evidently were written in a feigned hand — "Your life is in danger — all delay may be your ruin — address the minister at once, as to the

cause of your detention, and for the charges under which you are committed; demand permission to consult an advocate, and when demanded, it can't be refused. Write to Monsieur Baillot, of 4, Rue Chantierine, in whom you may trust implicitly, and who has already instructions for your defence. Accept the enclosed, and believe in the faithful attachment of a sincere friend." A *billet de banque* for three thousand francs was folded in the note, and fell to the ground as I read it.

"*Parbleu!* I'll not ask you to tear this, though," said the gaoler, as he handed it to me; "and now let me see you destroy the other."

I read and re-read the few lines over and over, some new meaning striking me at each word, while I asked myself from whom it could have come. Was it De Beauvais? or dare I hope it was one dearest to me of all the world? Who then, in the saddest hour of my existence, could step between me and my sorrow, and leave hope as my companion in the dreary solitude of a prison.

"Again, I say, be quick," cried the gaoler; "my being here so long may be remarked. Tear it at once."

He followed with an eager eye every morsel of paper as it fell from my hand, and only seemed at ease as the last dropped to the ground; and then, without speaking a word, unlocked the door and withdrew.

The shipwrecked sailor, clinging to some wave-tossed raft, and watching with bloodshot eye the falling day, where no friendly sail has once appeared, and at last, as every hope dies out one by one within him, he hears a cheer break through the plashing of the sea, calling on him to live, may feel something like what were my sensations, as once more alone in my cell I

thought of the friendly voice that could arouse me from my cold despair, and bid me hope again.

What a change came over the world to my eyes: the very cell itself no longer seemed dark and dreary; the faint sun-light that fell through the narrow window seemed soft and mellow; the voices I heard without struck me not as dissonant and harsh; the reckless gaiety I shuddered at; the dark treachery I abhorred. I could compassionate the one, and openly despise the other; and it was with that stout determination at my heart that I sallied forth into the garden where still the others lingered, waiting for the drum that summoned them to dinner.

CHAPTER IV.

The "Chouans."

WHEN night came, and all was silent in the prison, I sat down to write my letter to the minister. I knew enough of such matters to be aware that brevity is the great requisite; and, therefore, without any attempt to anticipate my accusation, by a defence of my motives, I simply, but respectfully, demanded the charges alleged against me, and prayed for the earliest and most speedy investigation into my conduct. Such were the instructions of my unknown friend, and, as I proceeded to follow them, their meaning at once became apparent to me. Haste was recommended, evidently to prevent such explanations and inquiries into my conduct, as more time might afford. My appearance at the chateau might still be a mystery to them, and one which might remain unfathomable, if any plausible reason were put forward. And what more could be laid to my charge? True the brevet of colonel found on my person; but

this I could with truth allege had never been accepted by me. They would scarcely condemn me on such testimony, unsupported by any direct charge; and who could bring such save De Beauvais. Flimsy and weak as such pretexts were, yet were they enough in my then frame of mind to support my courage and nerve my heart; but more than all, I trusted in the sincere loyalty I felt for the cause of the government and its great chief — a sentiment which, however difficult to prove, gave myself that inward sense of safety, which only can flow from strong conviction of honesty. It may so happen, thought I, that circumstances may appear against me, but I know and feel my heart is true and firm, and even at the worst such a consciousness will enable me to bear whatever may be my fortune.

The next morning my altered manner and happier look, excited the attention of the others, who by various endeavours tried to fathom the cause, or learn any particulars of my fate; but in vain, for already I was on my guard against even a chance expression, and, save on the most common-place topics, held no intercourse with any. Far from being offended at my reserve, they seemed rather to have conceived a species of respect for one, whose secrecy imparted something of interest to him; and while they tried, by the chance allusion to political events and characters, to sound me, I could see that though baffled, they by no means gave up the battle.

As time wore on, this half persecution died away — each day brought some prisoner or other amongst us, or removed some of those we had to other places of confinement, and thus I became forgotten in the interests of newer events. About a week after my entrance

we were walking as usual about the gardens, when a rumour ran, that a prisoner of great consequence had been arrested the preceding night, and conveyed to the Temple; and various surmises were afloat as to who he might be, or whether he should be "*en secret*," or at large. While the point was eagerly discussed, a low door from the house was opened, and the gaoler appeared, followed by a large powerful man, whom in one glance I remembered as the chief of the Vendean party at the chateau, and the same who effected his escape in the Bois de Boulogne. He passed close to where I stood, his arm folded on his breast — his clear blue eye bent calmly on me — yet never by the slightest sign did he indicate that we had ever met before. I divined at once his meaning, and felt grateful for what I guessed might be a measure necessary to my safety.

"I tell you," said a shrivelled old fellow, in a worn dressing gown and slippers, who held the *Moniteur* of that day in his hand — "I tell you it is himself; and see his hand is wounded — though he does his best to conceal the bandage in his bosom."

"Well, well — read us the account: where did it occur?" cried two or three in a breath.

The old man seated himself on a bench, and, having arranged his spectacles, and unfolded the journal, held out his hand to proclaim silence, when suddenly a wild cheer broke from the distant part of the garden, whither the newly-arrived prisoner had turned his steps — a second louder followed, in which the cry of "*Vive le Roi*" could be distinctly heard.

"You hear them," said the old man. "Was I right now? I knew it must be him."

"Strange enough, too, he should not be *en secret*,"

said" another. "The generals had never been suffered to speak to any one since their confinement. But read on, let us hear it."

"On yesterday morning," said the little man, reading aloud, "Picot, the servant of George, was arrested, and although every endeavour was made to induce him to confess where his master was —"

"Do you know the meaning of that phrase, Duchos?" said a tall, melancholy-looking man, with a bald head — "that means the torture; thumb screws and flint vices are the mode once more; see here." As he spoke he undid a silk handkerchief that was wrapped around his wrist, and exhibited a hand that seemed actually mashed into fragments — the bones were forced in many places through the flesh, which hung in dark-coloured and blood-stained pieces about.

"I would show that hand at the tribunal," muttered an old soldier in a faded blue frock. "I'd hold it up when they'd ask me to swear."

"Your head would only fare the worse for doing so," said the abbé. "Read on, Monsieur Duchos."

"Oh, where was I? — *Pardieu*, colonel, I wish you would cover that up: I shall dream of that terrible thumb all night. — Here we are — 'Though nothing could be learned from Picot, it was ascertained that the brigand —'"

"Ha, ha," said a fat little fellow in a blouse, "they call them all brigands — Moreau is a brigand — Pichegru is a brigand too."

"That the brigand had passed Monday night near Chaillot, and on Tuesday, towards evening, was seen at St. Genevieve, where it was suspected he slept on the mountain; on Wednesday the police traced him to

the cabriolet stand at the end of the Rue de Condé, where he took a carriage and drove towards the Odeon."

"Probably he was going to the spectacle. What did they play that night?" said the fat man. "'*La mort de Barberousse*' perhaps."

The other read on. — "The officer cried out, as he seized the bridle, *je vous arrête*, when George levelled a pistol and shot him through the forehead, and then springing over the dead body dashed down the street. The butchers of the neighbourhood, who knew the reward offered for his apprehension, pursued and fell upon him with their hatchets; a hand-to-hand encounter followed, in which the brigand's wrist was nearly severed from his arm, and thus disabled and overpowered he was secured and conveyed to the Temple."

"And who is this man?" said I in a whisper to the tall person near me.

"The General George Cadoudal — a brave Breton, and a faithful follower of his king," replied he; "and may heaven have pity on him now." He crossed himself piously as he spoke, and moved slowly away.

George Cadoudal, repeated I to myself — the same whose description figured on every wall of the capital, and for whose apprehension immense rewards were offered; and with an inward shudder I thought of my chance intercourse with the man — to harbour whom was death — the dreadful chief of the Chouans — the daring Breton — of whom Paris rung with stories. And this was the companion of Henri de Beauvais. Revolving such thoughts, I strolled along unconsciously, until I reached the place where, some days before, I had seen the Vendéans engaged in prayer. The loud tone of a deep voice arrested my steps. I stopped and listened.

It was George himself who spoke; he stood, drawn up to his full height, in the midst of a large circle who sat around on the grass. Though his language was a *patois* of which I was ignorant, I could catch here and there some indication of his meaning, as much perhaps from his gesture and the look of those he addressed, as from the words themselves. It was an exhortation to them to endure with fortitude the lot that had befallen them — to meet death when it came without fear, as they could do so without dishonour — to strengthen their courage by looking to him, who would always give them an example of what they should be. The last words he spoke were in a plainer dialect, and almost these — “Throw no glance on the past. We are where we are — we are where God in his wisdom, and for his own ends, has placed us. If this cause be just, our martyrdom is a blessed one; if it be not so, our death is our punishment; and never forget that you are permitted to meet it from the same spot where our glorious monarch went to meet his own.”

A cry of *Vive le Roi*, half stifled by sobs of emotion, broke from the listeners, and they rose, and pressed around him.

There he stood in the midst, while, like children, they came to kiss his hand — to hear him speak one word — even to look on him. Their swarthy faces, where hardship and suffering had left many a deep line and furrow, beamed with smiles as he turned towards them; and many a proud look was bent on the rest by those to whom he addressed a single word. One I could not help remarking above the others, a slight, pale, and handsome youth, whose almost girlish cheek the first down of youth was shading. George leaned

his arm round his neck, and called him by his name, and in a voice almost tremulous from emotion. "And you, Bouvet de Lozier, whose infancy wanted nothing of luxury and enjoyment — for whom all that wealth and affection could bestow were in abundance — how do you bear these rugged reverses, my dear boy?"

The youth looked up with eyes bathed in tears; the hectic spot in his face gave way to the paleness of death, and his lips moved without a sound.

"He has been ill — the count has," said a peasant in a low voice.

"Poor fellow," said George. "He was not meant for trials like these; the cares he used to bury in his mother's lap met other consolations than our ruder ones. Look up, Bouvet, my man, and remember you are a man."

The youth trembled from head to foot, and looked fearfully around, as if dreading something, while he clutched the strong arm beside him, as though for protection.

"Courage, boy — courage," said George. "We are together here — what can harm you."

Then dropping his voice, and turning to the rest he added —

"They have been tampering with his reason — his eye betrays a wandering intellect. Take him with you, Claude — he loves you — and do not leave him for a moment."

The youth pressed George's fingers to his pale lips, and, with head bent down and listless gait, moved slowly away.

As I wandered from the spot, my heart was full of all I witnessed. The influence of their chief had sur-

prised me the night of the attack on the chateau. But how much more wonderful did it seem now, when confined within the walls of a prison — the only exit to which was the path that led to the guillotine. Yet was their reliance on all he said as great, as implicit their faith in him, as warm their affection as though success had crowned each effort he suggested, and that fortune had been as kind, as she had proved adverse to his enterprise.

Such were the Chouans in the Temple. Life had presented to their hardy natures too many vicissitudes to make them quail beneath the horrors of a prison — death they had confronted in many shapes, and they feared it not even at the hands of the executioner. Loyalty to the exiled family of France was less a political than a religious feeling — one inculcated at the altar, and carried home to the fire-side of the cottage. Devotion to their king was a part of their faith. The sovereign was but a saint the more in their calendar. The glorious triumphs of the revolutionary armies — the great conquests of the consulate — found no sympathy within their bosoms; they neither joined the battle nor partook of the ovation. They looked on all such as the passing pageant of the hour — and muttered to each other, that the *bon Dieu* could not bless a nation that was false to its king.

Who could see them, as they met each morning, and not feel deeply interested in these brave but simple peasants. At day-break they knelt together in prayer, their chief officiating as priest; their deep voices joined in the hymn of their own native valleys, as with tearful eyes they sang the songs that reminded them of home. The service over, George addressed them in a short

speech — some words of advice and guidance for the coming day — reminding them that ere another morning shone, many might be summoned before the tribunal to be examined, and from thence led forth to death; exhorting them to fidelity to each other, and loyalty to their glorious cause. Then came the games of their country, which they played with all the enthusiasm of liberty and happiness. These were again succeeded by hours passed in hearing and relating stories of the beloved Bretagne — of its tried faith and its ancient bravery. While through all, they lived a community apart from the other prisoners, who never dared to obtrude upon them; nor did the most venturesome of the police spies ever transgress a limit that might have cost him his life.

Thus did these two so different currents run side by side within the walls of the Temple, and each regarding the other with distrust and dislike.

While thus I felt a growing interest for these bold but simple children of the forest, my anxiety for my own fate grew hourly greater. No answer was ever returned to my letter to the minister, nor any notice taken of it whatever; and though each day I heard of some one or other being examined before the “*Tribunal Spécial*,” or the *Préfet de Police*, I seemed as much forgotten as though the grave enclosed me. My dread of any thing like acquaintance or intimacy with the other prisoners prevented my learning much of what went forward each day, and of which, from some source or other, they seemed well informed. A chance phrase — an odd word now and then dropped — would tell me of some new discovery by the police, or some recent confession by a captured conspirator; but of what the crime

consisted, and who were they principally implicated, I remained totally ignorant.

It was well known that both Moreau and Pichegru were confined in a part of the tower that opened upon the terrace; but neither suffered to communicate with each other, nor even to appear at large like the other prisoners. It was rumoured too, that each day one or both were submitted to long and searching examinations, which it was said had hitherto elicited nothing from either, save total denial of any complicity whatever, and complete ignorance of the plots and machinations of others.

So much we could learn from the *Moniteur*, which reached us each day; and, while assuming a tone of open reprobation regarding the Chouans, spoke in terms the most cautious and reserved respecting the two generals, as if probing the public mind how far their implication in treason might be credited, and with what faith the proofs of their participation might be received.

At last the train seemed laid; the explosion was all prepared, and nothing wanting but the spark to ignite it. A letter from Moreau to the consul appeared in the columns of the government paper, in which, after recapitulating in terms most suitable the services he had rendered the republic while in command of the army of the Rhine, the confidence he had always possessed of the convention, the frequent occasions which had presented themselves to him of gratifying ambitious views — had he conceived such — he adverted in brief but touching terms to his conduct on the 18th Brumaire, in seconding the adventurous step taken by Buonaparte himself, and attributed the neglect his devotion had met with, rather to the interference and plotting of

his enemies, than to any real estrangement on the part of the consul. Throughout the whole of the epistle there reigned a tone of reverence for the authority of Buonaparte most striking and remarkable; there was nothing like an approach to the equality which might well be supposed to subsist between two great generals: albeit, the one was at the height of power, and the other sunk in the very depth of misfortune. On the contrary, the letter was nothing more than an appeal to old souvenirs and former services — to one who possessed the power, if he had the will, to save him; it breathed throughout the sentiments of one who demands a favour, and that favour, his life and honour, at the hands of him who already had constituted himself the fountain of both.

While such was the position of Moreau, a position which resulted in his downfall, chance informed us of the different ground occupied by his companion in misfortune, the General Pichegru.

About three days after the publication of Moreau's letter, we were walking as usual in the garden of the Temple, when a *huissier* came up, and beckoning to two of the prisoners, desired them to follow him. Such was the ordinary course by which one or more were daily summoned before the tribunal for examination, and we took no notice of what had become a matter of every-day occurrence, and went on conversing as before about the news of the morning. Several hours elapsed without the others having returned, and at last we began to feel anxious about their fate, when one of them made his appearance; his heightened colour and agitated expression betokening that something more than common had occurred.

"We were examined with Pichegru," said the prisoner, who was an old quarter-master in the army of the Upper Rhine, as he sat down upon a bench, and wiped his forehead with his handkerchief.

"Indeed!" said the tall colonel, with the bald head: "before Monsieur Réal, I suppose?"

"Yes, before Réal. My poor old general — there he was, as I used to see him formerly, with his hand in the breast of his uniform, his pale, thin features as calm as ever, until at last, when roused, his eyes flashed fire, and his lip trembled before he broke out into such a torrent of attack."

"Attack, say you," interrupted the abbé — "a bold course, my faith! in one who has need of all his powers for defence."

"It was ever his tactique to be the assailant," said a bronzed, soldier-like fellow, in a patched uniform, — "he did so in Holland."

"He chose a better enemy to practise it with than he has done now," resumed the quarter-master, sadly.

"Whom do you mean?" cried half a dozen voices together.

"The consul!"

"The consul! Buonaparte! Attack *him*!" repeated one after the other, in accents of surprise and horror. "Poor fellow, he is deranged."

"So I almost thought myself, as I heard him," replied the quarter-master; "for, after submitting with patience to a long and tiresome examination, he suddenly, as if endurance could go no farther, cried out '*assez!*' The préfet started, and Thuriot who sat beside him looked up terrified, while Pichegru went on. 'So,

the whole of this negotiation about Cayenne is then a falsehood. Your promise to make me governor there, if I consented to quit France for ever, was a trick to extort confession, or a bribe to silence. Be it so. — Now come what will, I'll not leave France; and more, still, I'll declare every thing before the judges openly at the tribunal. The people shall know, all Europe shall know, who is my accuser, and what he is. Yes, your consul himself treated with the Bourbons in Italy: the negotiations were begun, continued, carried on, and only broken off by his own excessive demands. Ay, I can prove it: his very return from Egypt through the whole English fleet, — that happy chance, as you were wont to term it, — was a secret treaty with Pitt for the restoration of the exiled family on his reaching Paris. These facts, and facts you shall confess them, are in my power to prove; and prove them I will in the face of all France.' ”

“Poor Pichegru,” said the abbé, contemptuously. “What an ill-tempered child a great general may be after all! Did he think the hour would ever come for him to realize such a dream?”

“What do you mean?” cried two or three together.

“The Corsican never forgets a vendetta,” was the cool reply, as he walked away.

“True,” said the colonel, thoughtfully, “quite true.”

To me these words were riddles. My only feeling towards Pichegru was one of contempt and pity, that in any depth of misfortune he could resort to such an unworthy attack upon him who still was the idol of all my thoughts; and for this the conqueror of Holland stood now as low in my esteem as the most vulgar of the rabble gang that each day saw sentenced to the galleys.

CHAPTER V.

The reign of terror under the consulate.

ON the morning that followed the scene I have spoken of came the news of the arrest, the trial, and the death of the Duc d'Enghien. That terrible tragedy, which yet weighs, and will weigh for ever on the memory of the period, reached us in our prison with all the terrible force of circumstances to make it a day of sorrow and mourning. Such details as the journals afforded but little satisfied our curiosity. The youth, the virtues, the bravery of the prince had made him the idol of his party; and while his death was lamented for his own sake, his followers read in it the determination of the government to stop at nothing in their resolve to exterminate that party. A gloomy silence sat upon the Chouans, who no longer moved about, as before, regardless of their confinement to a prison. Their chief remained apart; he neither spoke to any one, nor seemed to notice those who passed: he looked stunned and stupified, rather than deeply affected, and when he lifted his eyes their expression was cold and wandering. Even the other prisoners, who rarely gave way to feeling of any kind, seemed at first overwhelmed by these sad tidings; and doubtless many who before had trusted to rank and influence for their safety, saw how little dependence could be placed on such aid, when the blow had fallen upon a "Condé" himself.

I, who neither knew the political movements of the time, nor the sources of the danger the consul's party anticipated, could only mourn over the unhappy fate of a gallant prince whose daring had cost him his life, and never dreamed for a moment of calling in question the

honour or good faith of Buonaparte in an affair of which I could have easily believed him totally ignorant. Such, indeed, was the representation of the *Moniteur*; and whatever doubts the hints about me might have excited, were speedily allayed by the accounts I read of the consul's indignation at the haste and informality of the trial, and his deep anger at the catastrophe that followed it.

"Savary will be disgraced for this," said I to the abbé, who leaned over my shoulder while I read the paper. "Buonaparte can never forgive him."

"You mistake, my dear Sir," replied he, with a strange expression I could not fathom: "the consul is the most forgiving of men; he never bears malice."

"But here was a dreadful event — a crime perhaps."

"Only a fault," resumed he. "By-the-bye, colonel, this order about closing the barriers will be excessively inconvenient to the good people of Paris."

"I have been thinking over that, too," said an over-dressed, affected-looking youth, whose perfumed curls and studied costume formed a strange contrast with the habits of his fellow-prisoners. "If they shut up the barrier de l'Etoile, what are they to do for Longchamps?"

"*Parbleu*, that did not strike me," interposed the colonel, tapping his forehead with his finger. "I'll wager a crown they haven't thought of that themselves."

"The Champs Elysées are surely long enough for such tomfoolery," said the quarter-master, in a gruff, savage tone.

"Not one half," was the imperturbable reply of the youth: "and Longchamps promised admirably this year. I had ordered a caleche — light blue, with gilt circles

on the wheels, and a bronzed carving to the pole — like an antique chariot.”

“*Parbleu*, you are more likely to take your next airing in a simpler conveyance,” said the quartermaster, with a grin.

“I was to have driven la Comtesse de Beauflers to the Bois de Boulogne —”

“You must content yourself with the Count de la Marque” — the prison name of the executioner — “instead,” growled out the other.

I turned away, no less disgusted at the frivolity that could only see in the dreadful event that took place the temporary interruption to a vain and silly promenade, than at the savage coarseness that could revel in the pain common misfortune gave him the privilege of inflicting.

Such, however, was the prevalent tone of thinking and speaking there. The death of friends — the ruin of those best loved and cared for — the danger that each day came nearer to themselves — were all casualties to which habit, recklessness of life, and libertinism had accustomed them; while about former modes of life, the pleasures of the capital, its delights and dissipation, they conversed with the most eager interest. It is thus, while in some natures misfortunes will call forth into exercise the best and noblest traits that in happier circumstances had never found the necessity that gave them birth, so, in others, adversity depresses and demoralizes those weaker temperaments, that seem formed to sail safely in the calm waters, but never destined to brave the stormy seas of life.

With such associates I could have neither sympathy nor friendship; and my life passed on in one unbroken

and dreary monotony — day succeeding day, and night following night — till my thoughts, turned ever inward, had worn as it were a track for themselves, in which the world without and its people had no share whatever. Not only was my application to the minister unanswered, but I was never examined before any of the tribunals; and sometimes the dreadful fate of those prisoners who, in the reign of terror, passed their whole life in prison, their crimes — their very existence forgotten, would cross my mind, and strike me with terror unspeakable.

If, in the sombre atmosphere of the Temple a sad and cheerless monotony prevailed, events followed fast on each other in that world from which its gloomy walls excluded us: every hour was some new feature of the dark conspiracy brought to light; the vigilance of Monsieur Réal slept not night or day; and all that bribery, terror, or torture could effect, was put into requisition to obtain full and precise information as to every one concerned in the plot.

It was a bright fresh morning in April, the sixth of the month — the day is graven on my memory — when, on walking forth into the garden, I was surprised to see the prisoners standing in a circle round a tree on which a placard was fastened, with glances eagerly turned towards the paper, or bent sadly to the ground. They stood around, sad and silent: to my question of what had occurred, a significant look at the tree was the only reply I received, while in the faces of all I perceived that some dreadful news had reached them. Forcing my way with difficulty through the crowd, I at length approached near enough to read the placard, on which, with large letters, it was written —

“Charles Pichegru, ex-Général Républicain, s'est étranglé dans sa prison.

“Avril 6. Le Temple.”

“And did Pichegru, the great conqueror of Holland, die by his own hand?” said I, as my eyes rested on the fatal bulletin.

“Don’t you read it, young man?” replied a deep solemn voice beside me, which I at once knew was that of General George himself. “Can you doubt the accuracy of information supplied by the police?”

The by-standers looked up with a terrified and frightened expression, as if dreading lest the very listening to his words might be construed into an acquiescence in them.

“Trust me, he is dead,” continued he: “they who have announced his fate here have reason to be relied on. It now only remains to be seen how he died: these prison maladies have a strange interest for us who live in the infected climate; and if I mistake not, I see the *Moniteur* yonder, a full hour before its usual time. See what a blessing, gentlemen, you enjoy in a paternal government, which in moments of public anxiety can feel for your distress, and hasten to alleviate it.”

The tone of sarcasm he spoke in — the measured fall of every word, sank into the hearers’ minds, and though they stood mute, they did not even move from the spot.

“Here is the *Moniteur* now,” said the quartermaster, opening the paper and reading aloud.

“To his oft-repeated assurances that he would make no attempt upon his life —”

A rude burst of laughter from George interrupted the reader here.

"I ask your pardon, Sir," said he, touching his cap: "proceed, I promise not to interrupt you again."

"That he would make no attempt upon his life, General Pichegru obtained permission that the sentries should be stationed outside his cell during the night. Having provided himself with a faggot, which he secreted beneath his bed, he supped as usual in the evening of yesterday; eating heartily at eleven o'clock, and retiring to rest by twelve. When thus alone he placed the stick within the folds of the black silk cravat he generally wore round his neck in such a manner as when twisted to act like a tourniquet; and having turned it with such a degree of force as to arrest the return of blood from the head, he fastened it beneath his head and shoulder, and in this manner, apoplexy supervening, expired."

"Par St. Louis, Sir," cried George, "the explanation is admirable, and most satisfactorily shows how a man may possess life long enough to be certain he has killed himself. The only thing wanting is for the general to assist in dressing the *procès* verbal, when doubtless his own views of his case would be equally edifying and instructive; and see, already the ceremony has begun."

As he spoke, he pointed to a number of persons who crossed the terrace, preceded by Savary, in his uniform of the *gendarmes d'élite*, and who went in the direction of the cell where the dead body lay.

The prisoners now fell into little knots and groups, talking beneath their breath, and apparently terrified at every stir about them — each compared his sensation of what he thought he heard during the night with the other. Some asserted that they distinctly heard the

chains of the drawbridge creak long after midnight; others vouched for the quick tramp of feet along the corridors, and the sounds of strange voices; and one whose cell was beneath that of Pichegru, said that he was awoke before day by a violent crash overhead, followed by a harsh sound like coughing, which continued for some time, and then ceased entirely. These were vague uncertain signs, yet what horrible thoughts did they not beget in each listener's mind!

As I stood terror-struck and speechless, I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned, it was the abbé, who, with a smile of peculiar irony, stood behind me.

"Poor Savary," said he in a whisper; "how will he ever get over this blunder, and it so very like the former one?"

He did not wait for a reply, but moved away.

"Who is to be the next, Sir?" cried George, with a deep voice, as he saw the assemblage thus accidentally collected about to break up — "Moreau, perhaps. One thing I bid you all bear witness to: suicide is a crime I'll never commit. Let no narrative of a cravat and a faggot —"

"Do you never eat mushrooms, general?" said the abbé, drily; and whether from the manner of the speaker, or the puzzled look of him to whom the speech was addressed, the whole crowd burst into a fit of laughter — the emotion seemed like one in which relief was felt by all. They laughed long and loud — and now the faces that a minute before were marked by every character of deep affliction, looked merry and happy. Each had some story, some apropos to tell, or some smart witticism to let off against his neighbour; and to hear them you would say that never was there a subject

more suggestive of drollery than the one of suicide and sudden death.

And thus was it ever: no event however dreadful — no circumstance however shocking, could do more than momentarily affect those whose life offered no security, nor was governed by any principle. Levity and unbelief — unbelief that extended not only to matters of religion, but actually penetrated every relation of life, rendering them sceptical of friendship, love, truth, honour, and charity — were the impulses under which they lived; and they would have laughed him to scorn who should have attempted to establish another code of acting or thinking. Such feelings, if they made them but little suited to all the habits and charities of life, certainly rendered them most indifferent to death; and much of that courage so much lauded and admired on the scaffold, had no other source than in the headlong recklessness the prison had inculcated — the indifference to every thing, where everything was questionable and doubtful.

I struggled powerfully against the taint of such a consuming malady. I bethought me of my boyhood and its early purpose — of him who first stirred my soul to ambition — and asked myself, what would he have thought of me had I yielded to such a trial as this? I pictured before me a career, when such devotion as I felt, aided by a stout heart, must win its way to honour: and when roused to thought, these low depressing dreams, these dark hours of doubt and despair vanished before it. But gradually my health yielded — my lethargic apathy increased upon me — the gloomy walls of my cell had thrown their shadow over my spirit, and I sank into a state of moping indifference,

in which I scarcely marked the change of day and night; and at length felt that had the sentence been pronounced, which condemned me for life to the walls of the Temple, I could have heard it without emotion.

"Come, sous-lieutenant, it's your turn now!" said the turnkey, entering my cell one morning, where I sat alone at breakfast; "I have just received the orders for your appearance."

"How! where?" said I, scarcely able to do more than guess at the meaning of his words; "before the préfet, is it?"

"No, no, a very different affair, indeed: you are summoned with the Chouan prisoners to appear at the Palais de Justice."

"The Palais!" said I, as for the first time for weeks past a sentiment of fear crept through me. "Are we to be tried without having a list of the charges alleged against us?"

"You'll hear them time enough in court."

"Without an advocate to defend us?"

"The president will name one for that purpose."

"And can the jury —"

"Jury! there is no jury; the consul has suspended trial by jury for two years. Come, come, don't be downhearted — your friends without are singing away as gaily as though it were a festival. My faith, that General George is made of iron I believe. He has been confined, *en secret*, these ten days — his rations diminished to almost a starvation level; and yet there is he now, with his countenance as calm, and his look as firm as if he were at large on the hills of La Vendée. Cheer up, then — let the example of your chief —"

"Chief! he is no chief of mine."

“That’s as it may, or may not be,” replied he gruffly, as though wounded by what he deemed a want of confidence in his honour; “however, make haste and dress, for the carriages will be here to convey you to the Palais — and there now are the *gendarmes d’élite* assembling in the court.”

As I proceeded to dress, I could see from the window of my cell that a squadron of gendarmes, in full uniform, were drawn up in the square of the prison, along one side of which were several carriages standing, each with two gendarmes seated on the box. The prisoners were confined to their walls; but at every window some face appeared peering anxiously at the proceedings beneath, and watching, with inquisitive gaze, every even the slightest movement.

Just as the clock struck nine the door of my cell was opened, and a greffier of the court entered; and, taking from a black portmanteau at his side a roll of paper, began without delay to repeat in a sing-song recitative tone, a formal summons of the Grand Tribunal for the “surrender of the body of Thomas Burke, sous-lieutenant of the *huitième* hussars, now in the prison of the Temple, and accused of the crime of treason.”

The last word made me shudder as it fell from him; and not all my stoical indifference of weeks past was proof against such an accusation. The gaoler having formally listened to the document, and replied by reading aloud another, delivered me over to the officer, who desired me to follow him.

In the court beneath the greater number of the prisoners were already assembled. George, among the number, was conspicuous, not only by his size and

proportions, but by a handsome uniform, in the breast of which he wore his decoration of St. Louis, from which descended a bright bow of crimson ribbon. A slight bustle at one of the doorways of the tower suddenly seemed to attract his attention, and I saw that he turned quickly round, and forced his way through the crowd to the place. Eager to learn what it was, I followed him at once. Pushing with some difficulty forward, I reached the doorway, on the step of which lay a young man in a fainting fit. His face, pale as death, had no colour save two dark circles round the eyes, which, though open, were upturned and filmy. His cravat had been hastily removed by some of the by-standers, and showed a purple welt around his neck, on one side of which a mass of blood escaped beneath the skin, made a dreadful-looking tumour. His dress denoted a person of condition, as well as the character of his features; but never had I looked upon an object so sad and woe-begone before. At his side knelt George — his strong arm round his back, while his great massive hand patted the water on his brow. The stern features of the hardy Breton, which ever before had conveyed to me nothing but daring and impetuous passion, were softened to a look of womanly kindness — his blue eye beaming as softly as though it were a mother leaning over her infant.

“Bouvet, my dear, dear boy, remember *thou* art a Breton — rally thyself, my child — bethink thou of the cause.”

The name of the youth at once recalled him whom I had seen some months before among the Chouan prisoners; and who, sad and sickly as he then seemed, was now much further gone towards the tomb.

"Bouvet," cried George, in an accent of heart-rending sorrow, "this will disgrace us for ever."

The youth turned his cold eyes round till they were fixed in the other's face; while his lips, still parted, and his cheek pale and flattened, gave him the appearance of a corpse suddenly called back to life.

"There, my own brave boy," said George, kissing his forehead — "there, thou art thyself again." He bent over till his lips nearly touched the youth's ear, and then whispered — "Dost thou forget the last words monseigneur spoke to thee, Bouvet? — '*Conserve toi pour tes amis, et contre nos ennemis communs.*'"

The boy started up at the sounds, and looked wildly about him, while his hands were opened widely with a kind of spasmodic motion.

"*Tonnerre de ciel,*" cried George, with frantic passion, "what have they done with him — his mind is gone. Bouvet — Bouvet de Lozier — knowest thou this?" He tore from his bosom a miniature, surrounded with large brilliants, and held it to the eyes of the youth.

A wild shriek broke from the youth as he fell back in strong convulsions. The dreadful cry seemed like the last wail of expiring reason — so sad, so piercing was its cadence.

"Look, see," said George, turning a savage scowl upon the crowd, "they have taken away his mind — he is an idiot."

"The General George Cadoudal," cried a loud voice from the centre of the court.

"Here," was the firm reply.

"This way, Sir — the carriage yonder."

"Monsieur Sol de Gisolles."

"Here," replied a tall, aristocratic looking personage, in deep mourning.

Sous-lieutenant Burke was the next name called, and I followed the others, and soon found myself seated in a close caleche, with a gendarme beside me, while two mounted men of the corps sat at either side of the carriage with drawn swords. Picot, the servant of George, the faithful Breton, was next summoned, and Lebourgeois, an old but handsome man, in the simple habit of a farmer, with his long white hair, and soft kind countenance. Many other names were called over, and nearly an hour elapsed before the ceremony was concluded, and the order was given to move forward.

At last the heavy gates were opened, and the procession issued forth. I was surprised to see that the entire Boulevard was lined with troops, behind which thousands of people were closely wedged — all the windows, and even the housetops, being filled with spectators.

When we reached the quays, the crowd were even greater still; and it required all the efforts of the troops to keep them back sufficiently to permit an open space for the carriages — while at all the streets that opened at the quays mounted dragoons were stationed to prevent any carriage passing down. Never had I beheld such a vast multitude of people; and yet, through all that crowded host, a deep, solemn silence prevailed — not a cry, nor a shout, was heard in all the way. Once only, at the corner of the Pont Neuf, a cry of "Vive Moreau" was given by some one in the crowd; but it was a solitary voice — and the moment after I saw a gendarme force his way through the mass, and seizing

a miserable-looking creature by the neck, hurry him along beside his horse towards the guard-house.

On crossing the bridge, I saw that a company of artillery and two guns were placed in position beside Desaix's monument, so as to command the Pont Neuf: all these preparations clearly indicating that the government felt the occasion such as to warrant the most energetic measures of security. There was something in the earnest look of the cannoniers, as they stood with their lighted matches beside the guns, that betrayed the resolve of one whose quick determination was ever ready for the moment of danger.

The narrow streets of the Isle St. Louis, more densely crowded than any part of the way, slackened our pace considerably, and frequently the gendarmes were obliged to clear the space before the carriages could proceed. I could not help feeling struck, as we passed along these miserable and dark alleys, where vice and crime, and wretchedness of every type, herded together — to hear, at every step, some expression of pity or commiseration from those who, themselves, seemed the veriest objects of compassion. "*Ah, voilà,*" cried an old creature in rags, on whose cotton bonnet a faded and dirty tri-coloured ribbon was fastened — "*Voilà, Moreau.* I'd know his proud face any day. Poor general, I hope it will not go hard with you to-day."

"Look there," screamed a hag, as the carriage in which Bouvet sat passed by. "Look at the handsome youth that's dying — Holy Virgin, he'll not be living when they reach the gate of the Palais." "And there," cried another — "there's a hussar officer, pale enough, I trow he is: come, I'll say a prayer or two for him there, it can do him no harm any how."

The hoarse rattle of a drum in front mingled with the noise of the cavalcade, and I now could hear the clank of a guard turning out. The minute after we stood before a colossal gateway, whose rich tracery shone in the most gorgeous gilding; it was in the splendid taste of Louis XIV., and well became the entrance of what once had been a royal palace. Alas, thought I, how unlike those who once trod this wide court is the melancholy cortege that now enters it.

As each carriage drew up at the foot of a wide flight of stone steps, the prisoners descended, and, escorted by gendarmes on each side, were led into the building. When all had reached the hall, the order was given to move forward, and we walked on till we came to a long gallery. On either side was a range of massive pillars, between which views were obtained of various spacious, but dimly-lighted chambers, apparently neglected and unused; some benches here and there, an old cabinet, and a deal table, were all the furniture. Here we halted for a few moments, till a door opening at the extreme end, a sign was made for us to advance, and now we heard a low rushing sound, like the distant breaking of the sea in a calm night. It grew louder as we went, till we could mark the mingling of several hundred voices, as they conversed in a subdued and under tone.

Then, indeed, a dreadful thrill ran through me, as I thought of the countless mass before whom I was to stand forth a criminal, and it needed every effort in my power to keep my feet.

A heavy curtain of dark cloth yet separated us from a view of the court, but we could hear the voice of the president commanding silence, and the monotonous in-

tonation of the clerk reading the order for the proceedings. This concluded, a deep voice called out, "Introduce the prisoners," and the words were repeated still louder by a huissier at the entrance; and at a signal the line moved forward, the curtain was drawn back, and we advanced into the court.

The crowd of faces that filled the vast space from the body of the court below, to the galleries above, turned, as we passed on, to the bench, at one side of the raised platform, near the seat of the judges. A similar bench, but unoccupied, ran along the opposite side, while directly in front of the judges were ranged the advocates in rows closely packed as they could sit; a small desk, somewhat advanced from the rest, being the seat reserved for the Procureur-général of the court.

The vast multitude of spectators — the pomp and circumstance of a court of justice — the solemn look of the judges arrayed in their dark robes and square black caps, reminding one of the officers of the Inquisition, as we see them in old paintings; the silence where so many were assembled — all struck me with awe, and I scarcely dared to look up, lest in the glances bent upon me I should meet some whose looks might seem to condemn me.

"Proclaim the *séance*," said the president.

And with a loud voice the huissier of the court made proclamation that the tribunal had commenced its sitting. This concluded, the Procureur-général proceeded to read the names of the accused, beginning with General Moreau, Armand de Polignac, Charles de Rivière, Sol de Gisolles, George Cadoudal, and some twenty others of less note, among which I heard with a sinking heart my own name pronounced. Some custo-

many formalities seemed now to occupy the court for a considerable time; after which the huissier called silence once more.

"General Moreau," said the president, in a deep voice that was heard throughout the entire court. "Rise up, Sir," added he, after a few seconds' pause. I looked down the bench, at the farthest end of which I saw the tall and well-knit figure of a man in the uniform of a general of the republic, his back was turned towards me, but his bearing and carriage were quite enough to distinguish the soldier.

"Your name and surname," said the president.

Before an answer could be returned, a dull sound, like something heavy falling, resounded through the court, and in an instant several persons around me stood up. I bent forward to see, and beheld the figure of Bouvet de Lozier stretched insensible upon the ground; beside him his faithful friend George was stooping, and endeavouring to open his vest and give him air. "Bring some water here quickly," cried the hardy Breton, in a tone that showed little respect for where he stood. "Your absurd ceremonial has frightened the poor boy out of his senses."

"Respect the court, Sir, or I commit you," said the president, in a voice of anger.

A contemptuous look, followed by a still more contemptuous shrug of the shoulders, was his reply.

"Remove the prisoner," said the president, pointing to the still fainting youth, "and proclaim silence in the court."

The officers of the tribunal carried the death-like figure of the boy down the steps, and bore him to some of the chambers near.

This little incident, slight and passing as it was, seemed much to affect the auditory, and it was some time before perfect silence could be again restored.

"So much for the regime of the Temple," said George, aloud, as he looked after the insensible form of his friend.

"Silence, Sir," cried one of the judges, M. Thuriot, a harsh and severe-looking man, whose hatred to the prisoners was the subject of much conversation in the prison.

"Ah, it is you, Tue-Roi," cried George, punning upon his name, for he had been one of the regicides. "You, there — I thought they had found you out long ere this."

A burst of laughter that nothing could repress broke through the crowded court, and it was not until some five or six persons were forcibly removed by the gendarmes that order was again restored.

"Read the act of accusation," said the president, in a deep solemn voice.

"In the name of the republic, one and indivisible —"

"Monsieur le Président," interrupted the Procureur-général, "I would submit to the court that, as in the first act of accusation there are several of the prisoners not included, they should not remain during the recital of the indictment."

A conversation of some minutes now took place between the judges, during which again the silence was unbroken in the court. I turned gladly from the gaze of the thousand spectators to the bench where my fellow-prisoners were seated; and, however varied by age, rank, and occupation, there seemed but one feeling

amongst them — a hardy and resolute spirit to brave every danger without flinching.

“Which of the prisoners are not accused under the first act?” said Thuriot.

“Charles Auguste Rebarde,” *dit le Noir*, “Guillaume Lebarde, and Thomas Burke, sous-lieutenant in the eighth regiment of hussars.”

“Let them withdraw,” said the president.

A slight bustle ensued in the body of the court as the gendarmes advanced to make a passage for our exit; and for a moment I could perceive that the attention of the assembly was drawn towards us. One by one we descended from the platform, and, with a gendarme on either side, proceeded to pass out, when suddenly the deep mellow voice of Cadoudal called aloud —

“Adieu, my friends, adieu! If we are not to be better treated than our prince, we shall never see you again.”

“Silence, Sir!” cried the president, severely; and then, turning towards the bar of advocates, he continued — “If that man have an advocate in this court, it would well become him to warn his client that such continued insult to the tribunal can only prejudice his cause.”

“I have none, and I wish for none,” replied George, in a tone of defiance. “This mockery is but the first step of the guillotine, and I can walk it without assistance.”

A renewed call of “Silence!” and a deep murmur through the assembly, was all I heard, as the door of the court opened and closed behind us. As we marched along a low vaulted corridor, the sounds of the court

grew fainter and fainter; and at last the echoes of our own steps were the only noises.

The room to which we were conducted was a small whitewashed chamber, around which ran a bench of unpainted wood. A deal table stood in the centre, on which was a common-looking earthenware jar of water, and some tin goblets. The window was several feet from the ground, and strongly barred with iron.

"La Salle d'attente is gloomy enough," said one of my companions, "and yet some of us may be very sorry to leave it."

"Not I, at least," cried the other, resolutely. "The basket beneath the guillotine will be an easier couch than I have slept on these three months."

CHAPTER VI.

The "Palais de Justice."

"It will go hard with Moreau to-day," said the elder of the two prisoners — a large, swarthy-looking Breton, in the dress of a sailor; "the consul hates him."

"Whom does he not hate?" said the younger — a slight and handsome youth. "Whom does he not hate that ever rivalled him in glory? What love did he bear to Kleber or Dessaix?"

"It is false," said I, fiercely. "Buonaparte's greatness stands far too high to feel such rivalry as theirs — the conqueror of Italy and of Egypt —"

"Is a Corsican," interrupted the elder.

"And a tyrant," rejoined the other, in the same breath.

"These words become you well," said I, bitterly; "would that no stain lay on my honour, and I could make you eat them."

“And who are you that dare to speak thus?” said the younger; “or how came one like you mixed up with men, whose hearts were in a great cause, and who came to sell their lives upon it?”

“I tell you, boy,” broke in the elder, in a slow and measured tone, “I have made more stalwart limbs than thine bend, and stronger joints crack, for less than thou hast ventured to tell us; but sorrow and suffering are hard masters, and I can bear more now than I was wont to do. — Let us have no more words.”

As he spoke, he leaned his head upon his hand, and turned towards the wall; the other, too, sat down in a corner of the cell, and was silent, and thus we remained for hours long.

The dreary stillness, made more depressing by the presence of the two prisoners, whose deep-drawn breathings were the only sounds they uttered, had something unspeakably sad and melancholy in it, and more than once I felt sorry for the few words I had spoken, and which separated those whose misfortunes should have made them brothers.

A confused and distant hum, swelling and falling at intervals, now filled the air; and gradually I could distinguish the shouts of people at a distance. This increased as it came nearer, and then I heard the tramping noise of many feet, as of a great multitude of people passing in the street below, and suddenly a wild cheer broke forth — “Vive le Consul!” “Vive Buonaparte!” followed the next instant by the clanking sound of a cavalry escort, while the cry grew louder and louder, and the *vivas* drowned all other sounds.

“You hear them, Guillaume, you hear them,” said the sailor to the other prisoner. “That shout is our

death-cry. Buonaparte comes not here to-day but to see his judges do his bidding."

"What care I?" said the other, fiercely. "The guillotine or the sabre, the axe or the bayonet — it is all one. We knew what must come of it."

The door opened as he spoke, and a greffier of the tribunal appeared with four gendarmes.

"Come, Messieurs," said he, "the court is waiting for you."

"And how go matters without, Sir?" said the elder, in an easy tone.

"Badly for the prisoners," said the greffier, shaking his head, "Monsieur Moreau, the general's brother, has done much injury — he has insulted the consul."

"Bravely done!" cried the younger man with enthusiasm. "It is well he should hear truth one day, though the tongue that uttered it should be cold the next."

"Move on, Sir," said the greffier, sternly. "Not you," added he, as I pressed forward after the rest. "Your time has not come."

"Would that it had," said I, as the door closed upon me, and I was left in total solitude.

The day was over, and the evening already late, when a turnkey appeared, and desired me to follow him. A moody indifference to every thing had settled on me, and I never spoke, as I walked behind him down corridor after corridor, and across a court, into a large massive-looking building, whose grated windows and strongly-barred doors reminded me of the Temple.

"Here is your cell," said he roughly, as he unlocked a low door near the entrance.

"It is gloomy enough," said I, with a sad smile.

"And yet many have shed tears to leave it before now," rejoined he, with a savage twinkle of his small eyes.

I was glad when the hoarse crash of the closed door told me I was alone, and I threw myself upon my bed, and buried my face in my hands.

There is a state which is not sleep, and yet is akin to it, into which grief can bring us — a half dreary stupor, where only sorrows are felt, and even they come dulled and blunted, as if time and years had softened down their sting. But no ray of hope shines there — a dreary waste, without a star; the cold dark sea, boundless and bleak, is not more saddening than does life then seem before us. There is neither path to follow nor goal to reach, and an apathy worse than death creeps over all our faculties; and yet when we awake we wish for this again. Into this state I sank, and when morning came felt sorry that the light should shine into my narrow cell, and rouse me from my stupor. When the turnkey entered to bring me breakfast, I turned towards the wall, and trembled lest he should speak to me; and it was with a strange thrill I heard the door close as he went out. The abandonment to one's sorrow — that daily, hourly indulgence in grief, which the uncheered solitude of a prison begets — soon brings the mind to the narrow range of one or two topics. With the death of hope all fancy and imagination perish — the springs of all speculation are dried up — and every faculty bent towards one point — the reason, like a limb unexercised, wastes, and pines, and becomes paralyzed.

Now and then the thought would flash across me —

what if this were madness, and I shuddered not at the thought: such had my prison made me.

Four days and nights passed over thus — a long, monotonous dream, in which I counted not the time, and I lay upon my straw bed watching the expiring light of the candle with that strange interest one attaches to every thing within the limits of a prison-cell. The flame waned and flickered: now lighting up for a second the cold grey walls, scratched with many a prisoner's name; now subsiding, it threw strange and fitful shapes upon them — figures that seemed to move and beckon to each other — goblin outlines, wild and fanciful; then came a bright flash as the wick fell, and all was dark.

If the dead do but sleep — was the first thought that crossed my mind as the gloom of total night wrapped every object about me, and a stillness most appalling prevailed. Suddenly I heard the sounds of a heavy bolt withdrawn, and a door opening, then a low rushing noise, like wind blowing through a narrow corridor, and at last the marching sounds of feet, and the accents of men speaking together; nearer and nearer they came, and at length halted at the door of my cell. A cold faint feeling — the sickness of the heart — crept over me; the hour — the sounds reminded me of what so often I had heard men speak of in the Temple, and the dread of assassination made me tremble from head to foot. The light streamed from beneath the door, and reached to my bed; and I calculated the number of steps it would take before they approached me. The key grated in the lock, and the door opened slowly, and three men stood at the entrance. I sprang up wildly to my feet — a sudden impulse of self-defence

seized me — and with a wild shout for them to come on, I rushed forward; my foot, however, caught the angle of the iron bedstead, and I fell headlong and senseless to the ground. Some interval elapsed; and when next I felt consciousness, I was lying full length on my bed — the cell lit up by two candles on the table, beside which sat two men, their heads bent eagerly over a mass of papers before them. One was an old and venerable-looking man, his white hair and long queue so bespeaking him; he wore a loose cloth cloak that covered his entire figure, but I could see that the brass scabbard of a sword projected beneath it; on the chair beside him, too, there lay a foraging-cap. The other much younger, though still not in youth, was a thin, pale, care-worn man; his forehead was high, and strongly marked; and there was an intensity and determination in his brow and about the angles of his mouth most striking; he was dressed in black, with deep ruffles at his wrist.

“It is quite clear, general,” said he, in a low and measured voice, where each word fell with perfect distinctness — “it is quite clear that they can press a conviction here if they will. The allegations are so contrived, as rather to indicate complicity, than actually establish it. The defence in such cases has to combat shadows, not overturn facts; and believe me, a procureur-général, armed by a police, is a dexterous enemy.”

“I have no doubt of it,” said the general, rapidly, “but what are the weak points? — where is he most assailable?”

“Every where,” said the other. “To begin — the secret information of the outbreak between Lord Whitworth and the consul — the frequent meetings with

Count de Beauvais — the false report to the chef de police — the concealment of this abbé — by-the-by, I am not quite clear about that part of the case; why have the prosecution not brought this abbé forward. It is evident they have his evidence, and can produce him, if they will: and I see no other name in the act of accusation than our old acquaintance — Mehée de La Touche —”

“The villain!” cried the general, with a stamp of indignation, while a convulsive spasm seemed to shake every fibre of his frame.

“Mehée de La Touche!” said I to myself. “I have heard that name before;” and like a lightning-flash it crossed my mind that such was the name of the man Marie de Meudon charged me with knowing.

“But still,” said the general, “what can they make of all these? that of indiscretion — folly — breach of discipline, if you will; but —”

“Wait a little,” said the other, quietly; “then comes the night of the chateau, in which he is found among the Chouan party in their very den, taking part in the defence.”

“No, no! Lamoricière, who commanded the cuirassiers, can establish the fact beyond question — that Burke took no part in the affray, and delivered his sword at once when called on.”

“At least they found him there, and on his person the brevet of colonel, signed by Monsieur himself.”

“Of that I can give no explanation,” replied the general; “but I am in possession of such information as can account for his presence at the chateau, and establish his innocence on that point.”

"Indeed," cried the advocate, for such he was; "with that much may be done."

"Unhappily, however," rejoined the general, "if such a disclosure is not necessary to save his life, I cannot venture to give it; the ruin of another must follow the explanation."

"Without it he is lost," said the advocate, solemnly.

"And would not accept of life with it," said I boldly, as I started up in my bed, and looked fixedly at them.

The general sprang back astonished and speechless; but the advocate, with more command over his emotions, cast his eyes upon the paper before him, and quickly asked, "And the commission — how do you account for that?"

"It was offered to, and refused by me. He who made the proposal forgot it on my table, and I was about to restore it when I was made prisoner."

"What condition was attached to your acceptance of it?"

"Some vague, indistinct proposals were made to me to join a conspiracy of which I was neither told the object nor intentions. Indeed I stopped any disclosure by rejecting the bribe."

"Who made these same proposals?"

"I shall not tell his name."

"No matter," said the advocate, carelessly: "it was Count de Beauvais;" and then, as if affecting to write, I saw his sharp eyes glance over towards me, while a smile of gratified cunning twitched his lip. "You will have no objection to say how first you became acquainted with him?"

The dexterity of this query, by replying to which I

at once established his preceding assumption, completely escaped me, and I gave an account of my first meeting with De Beauvais without ever dreaming of the inferences it led to.

"An unhappy rencontre, Sir," said the advocate, as if musing: "better have finished the intimacy, as you first intended, at the Bois de Boulogne."

"It may be as you say, Sir," said I, irritated by the flippancy of his remark; "but, perhaps, I may ask the name of the gentleman who takes such interest in my affairs, and by what right he meddles in them?"

The general started back in his chair, and was about to speak, when the advocate laying his hand gently on his arm to restrain him, and in a voice of the most unruffled smoothness, replied — "As to my name, Sir, it is Laurence Baillot; my rank is simple *avocat* of the Cour de Tribunal; and the 'right' by which I interfere in matters personal to you, is the consideration of fifty louis which accompanied this brief."

"And my name, young man, is Lieutenant-general d'Auvergne," said the old man proudly, as he stared me steadfastly in the face. I arose at once, and saluted the general with a deep and respectful obeisance. It was the same officer who reviewed us at the Polytechnique the day of my promotion. "You are now, I hope, satisfied with the reasons of our presence, and that nothing but considerations of your interest can have influenced our visit," said the *avocat* with calmness: "such being the case, sit down here, and relate all you can of your life since your leaving the Polytechnique; be brief too, for it is now three o'clock; the court opens at ten, your case will be called the second, and I must at least have three hours of sleep."

The general pointed to a seat beside him; I sat down, and without any delay proceeded to give a rapid account of all my adventures and proceedings, to the hour we were then assembled, only omitting all mention of Mademoiselle de Meudon's name, and such allusions to Beauvais as might lead to his crimination.

The advocate wrote down, as rapidly as I spoke them, the principal details of my history, and when I had concluded, perused the notes he had taken with a quick eye. "This will never do," said he, with more impatience in his manner than I had yet witnessed; "here are a mass of circumstances all unexplained, and all suspicious. It is now entirely a question of the feeling of the court. The charges if pressed, must lead to a conviction. Your innocence, Sir, may satisfy — indeed it has satisfied General d'Auvergne, who else had not been here this night — but the proofs are not before us." He paused for a moment, and then continued in a lower tone, addressing himself directly to the general, "We must entreat a delay; a day — two days, certainly, will establish the proofs against George and his accomplices; they will be condemned and executed at once. It is most likely that the court will not recur to capital punishment again. The example being made, any further demonstration will be needless. I see you put little faith in this manœuvre; but trust me, I know the temper of the tribunal; besides the political stroke has already succeeded. Buonaparte has conquered all his enemies; his next step will be to profit by the victory." These words were riddles to me at the time, though the day soon came when their meaning was palpable. "Yes, two days will do it," said he, confidently raising his voice as he spoke; "and then

whether there be a hussar the more, or one the less in France, will little trouble the current of events."

"Then, how to obtain the time; that is the question," said the general.

"Oh, we shall try something; there can always be a witness to be called; some evidence all essential, not forthcoming; some necessary proof not quite unravelled. What if we summoned this same abbé. The court will make proclamation for him. D'Ervan's the name."

"Yes; but if by so doing he may be involved."

"Fear nothing on that score; he'll never turn up, believe me. We can affect to show that his evidence is all important. Yes, we'll make the Abbé D'Ervan our first witness. Where shall we say he resides? Rouen I suppose will do. Yes, Rouen;" and so, without waiting for reply, he continued to write. "By this, you perceive," he remarked with a look of gratified cunning, "we shall disconcert their plans. They are evidently keeping this abbé up for some greater occasion; they have a case against himself, perhaps, in which the proofs are not yet sufficient for conviction. We'll trouble their game, and they may be glad to compromise with us."

The general looked as much confounded as myself at these schemes of the lawyer, but we both were silent.

A few questions more followed, to which he wrote down my answers as I gave them, and then starting up, he said — "And now, general, I must hasten home to bed. Be ready, at all events, for appearing before the tribunal, Mr. Burke; at ten you will be called, and so good night." He bowed formally to me, as he opened the door to permit the general to pass out first.

"I'll follow you in a moment," said the general, while he closed the door after him, and remained behind with me in the cell. "It was only this evening, Sir," said he, in a low voice, "at the return of Madame Buonaparte from Boulogne, that Mademoiselle de Meudon learned you were not at liberty. She has made me acquainted with the circumstances by which your present risk has been incurred, and has put me in possession of wherewithal to establish your innocence as regards the adventure at the Chateau d'Ancre. This disclosure, if it exculpates *you*, will of course criminate *her*, and among those too, where she has been received and admitted on terms of the closest friendship. The natural desire to save her cousin's life will not cover the act by which so horrible a conspiracy might have escaped punishment. Buonaparte never forgives! Now, I am in possession of this proof, and if you demand it, it shall be in your keeping. I have no hesitation in saying that the other charges against you can easily be got over — this one being refuted. What do you say?"

"Nothing could make me accept of such an exculpation," said I, resolutely; "and were it offered in spite of me, I'll plead guilty to the whole act, and suffer with the rest."

The old man's eyes glistened with pleasure, and I thought I saw a tear fall on his cheek. "Now," cried he, as he grasped my hand in both his — "now I feel that you are innocent, my brave boy, and come what will, I'll stand by you." With that he hurried from the cell, and followed the advocate, who was already calling with some impatience to have the doors unlocked.

I was again alone. No, not alone — for in my narrow cell hope was with me now.

CHAPTER VII.

The "Trial."

So doubtful was the government of the day in what way the people of Paris would be disposed to regard the trial of the Chouan prisoners, how far public sympathy might side with misfortune and heroism, and in what way they would regard Moreau, whose career in arms so many had witnessed with pride and enthusiasm, that for several days they did not dare to strike the decisive blow which was to establish their guilt, but advanced with slow and cautious steps, gradually accumulating a mass of small circumstances, on which the *Moniteur* each day commented, and the other journals of less authority expatiated, as if to prepare the public mind for further and more important revelations.

At last, however, the day arrived in which the mine was to be sprung. The secret police — whose information extended to all that went on in every class of the capital, who knew the chit-chat of the highest circles, equally as they did the grumblings of the Faubourg St. Antoine — pronounced the time had come when the fatal stroke might no longer be withheld, and when the long-destined vengeance should descend on their devoted heads.

The want of energy on the part of the prosecution — the absence of important witnesses, and of all direct evidence whatever, which marked the first four days of the trial, had infused a high hope and a strong sense of security into the prisoners' hearts. The proofs which they so much dreaded, and of whose existence they

well knew, were not forthcoming against them. The rumoured treachery of some of their party began, at length, to lose its terror for them — while in the lax and careless proceedings of the procureur-général they saw, or fancied they saw, a desire on the part of government to render the public uninterested spectators of the scene, and thus prepare the way for an acquittal, while no danger of any excitement existed.

Such was the state of matters at the close of the fourth day — a tiresome and desultory discussion on some merely legal question had occupied the court for several hours; and many of the spectators, wearied and tired out, had gone home disappointed in their expectations, and secretly resolving not to return the following day.

This was the moment for which the party in power had been waiting — the interval of false security, as it would seem, when all danger was past, and no longer any apprehension existed. The sudden shock of the newly-discovered proofs would then come with peculiar force, while, no matter how rapid any subsequent step might be, all charge of precipitancy or undue haste had been disproved by the tardy nature of the four first days' proceedings.

For the change of scene about to take place an early edition of the *Moniteur* prepared the public; and by day-break the walls of Paris were placarded with great announcements of the discoveries made by the government — how, by their untiring efforts, the whole plot, which was to deluge France with blood, and invert the glorious institutions of freedom they had acquired by the revolution, had been laid open. That new and convincing evidence of the guilt of the Chouans had

turned up — and a frightful picture of anarchy and social disorganization was displayed, all of which was to originate in an effort to restore the Bourbons to the throne of France.

While, therefore, the galleries of the court were crowded to suffocation at an early hour, and every avenue leading to the tribunal crammed with people, anxious to be present at this eventful crisis, the prisoners took their places on the “bench of the accused,” totally unaware of the reason of the excitement they witnessed, and strangely puzzled to conceive what unknown circumstance had re-invested the proceedings with a new interest.

As I took my place among the rest I stared with surprise at the scene — the strange contrast between the thousands there whose strained eyes and feverish faces betokened the highest degree of excitement, and that little group on which every look was turned — calm, and even cheerful. There sat George Cadoudal in the midst of them, his hands clasped in those at either side of him; his strongly-marked features perfectly at rest, and his eyes bent with a steady stare on the bench where the judges were seated. Moreau was not present, nor did I see some of the Chouans whom I remembered on the former day.

The usual formal proclamation of the court being made, silence was called by the crier — a useless precaution, as throughout that vast assembly not a whisper was to be heard. A conversation of some minutes took place between the procureur and the counsel for the prisoners, in which I recognised the voice of Monsieur Baillot my own advocate, which was interrupted by the

president, desiring that the proceedings should commence.

The procureur-général bowed, and took his seat, while the president, turning towards George, said —

“George Cadoudal, you have hitherto persisted in a course of blank denial regarding every circumstance of the conspiracy with which you are charged. You have asserted your ignorance of persons and places with which we are provided with proof to show you are well acquainted. You have neither accounted for your presence in suspected situations, nor satisfactorily shown what were the objects of your intimacy with suspected individuals. The court now desires to ask you, whether at this stage of the proceedings you wish to offer more explicit revelations, or explain any of the dubious events of your career?”

“I will answer any question you put to me,” replied George, sternly; “but I have lived too long in another country not to have learned some of its usages, and I feel no desire to become my own accuser. Let him there (he pointed to the procureur-général) do his office — he is the paid and salaried assailant of the innocent.”

“I call upon the court,” said the procureur, rising — when he was suddenly interrupted by the president saying, “We will protect you, monsieur le procureur; and once again we would admonish the accused, that insolence to the authorities of this court is but a sorry plea in vindication of his innocence, and shall be no recommendation to our mercy.”

“Your mercy!” said George, in a voice of scorn and sarcasm. “Who ever heard of a tiger’s benevolence

or a wolf's charity? And even if you wished it, he whose slaves you are —”

“I call upon you to be silent,” said an advocate, rising from a bench directly behind him — “another interruption of this kind and I shall abandon the defence.”

“What!” said George, turning quickly round and staring at him with a look of withering contempt, “and have they bought *you* over too?”

“Call the first witness,” said the president, and an indistinct murmur was heard, and a slight confusion seen to agitate the crowd, as the gendarmes opened a path towards the witness bench; and then I saw two men carrying something between them, which I soon perceived to be a man. The legs, which were alone apparent, hung down listlessly like those of a corpse, and one arm, which fell over the shoulder of the bearer, moved to and fro, as they went, like the limb of a dead man. Every neck was stretched from the galleries above, and along the benches beneath, to catch a glimpse of the mysterious figure, which seemed like an apparition from the grave come to give evidence. His face, too, was concealed by a handkerchief; and as he was placed in a chair provided for the purpose, the assistants stood at either side to support his drooping figure.

“Let the witness be sworn,” said the president; and with the aid of an officer of the court, a thin white hand was held up, on which the flesh seemed almost transparent from emaciation — a low muttering sound followed, and the president spoke again: “Let the witness be uncovered. George Cadoudal, advance!”

As the hardy Chouan stepped forward the handkerchief fell from the witness's face, while his head slowly

turned round towards the prisoner. A cry, like the yell of a wounded animal, broke from the stout Breton, as he bounded into the air and held up both his arms to their full height. "*Toi, toi,*" screamed he, in accents that seemed the very last of a heart wrung to agony, while he leaned forward, and fixed his eyes on him, till the very orbs seemed bursting from their sockets. "*Oui,*" added he, in a lower tone, but one which was felt in every corner of that crowded assemblage — "*Oui, c'est lui.*" Then clasping his trembling hands together, as his knees bent beneath him, he turned his eyes upwards, and said — "*Le bon Dieu,* that makes men's hearts and knows their thoughts, deals with us as he will; and I must have sinned sorely towards him when such punishment as this has fallen upon me — oh, my brother, my child, my own Bouvet de Lozier."

"Bouvet de Lozier," cried the other prisoners, with a shout wild as madness itself, while every man sprung forward to look at him. But already the head had fallen back over the chair, the limbs stretched out rigidly, and the arm fell heavily down. "He is dying" — "he is dead" — were the exclamations of the crowd, and a general cry for a doctor was heard around. Several physicians were soon at his side, and by the aid of restoratives he was gradually brought back to animation, but cold and speechless he lay, unable to understand any thing, and was obliged to be conveyed back again to his bed.

It was some time before the excitement of this harrowing scene was over; and when order at length was restored in the court, George Cadoudal was seen seated, as at first, on the bench, while around him his faithful followers were grouped. Like children round a beloved

father, some leaned on his neck, others clasped his knees — some covered his hands with kisses, and called him by the most endearing names. But though he moved his head from side to side, and tried to smile upon them, a cold vacancy was in his face, his lips were parted, and his eyes stared wildly before him, his very hair stood out from his forehead, on which the big drops of sweat were seen.

"Father, dear father, it is but one who is false — see, look how many of your children are true to you — think on us who are with you here, and will go with you to death without shrinking."

"He is but a child, too, father, and they have stolen away his reason from him," said another.

"Yes, they have brought him to this by suffering," cried a third, as with a clenched hand he menaced the bench where sat the judges.

"Order in the court," cried the president, but the command was reiterated again and again before silence could be obtained; and when again I could observe the proceedings, I saw the procureur-général addressing the tribunal, to demand a postponement, in consequence of the illness of the last witness, whose testimony was pronounced all conclusive.

A discussion took place on the subject between the counsel for the prisoners and the prosecution, and at length it was ruled that this trial should not be proceeded with till the following morning.

"We are, however, prepared to go on with the other cases," said the procureur, "if the court will permit."

"Certainly," said the president.

"In that case," continued the procureur, "we shall

call on the accused Thomas Burke, lieutenant of the *huitième* hussars, now present." For some minutes nothing more could be heard, for the crowded galleries, thronged with expectant hundreds, began now to empty. Mine was a name without interest for any; and the thronged masses rose to depart, while their over-excited minds found vent in words which drowned all else. It was in vain silence and order were proclaimed — the proceedings had lost all interest, and with it all respect, and for full ten minutes the uproar lasted. Meanwhile M. Baillot taking his place at my side, produced some most voluminous papers, in which he soon became deeply engaged. I turned one look throughout the now almost deserted seats, but not one face there was known to me. The few who remained seemed to stay rather from indolence than any other motive, as they lounged over the vacant benches, and yawned listlessly; and much as I dreaded the gaze of that appalling multitude, I sickened at the miserable isolation of my lot, and felt overwhelmed to think that for me there was not one who should pity or regret my fall. At last order was established in the court, and the procureur opened the proceeding by reciting the act of my accusation, in which all the circumstances already mentioned by my advocate were dwelt and commented on with the habitual force and exaggeration of bar oratory. The address was short, however, scarcely fifteen minutes long; and by the tone of the speaker, and the manner of the judges, I guessed that my case excited little or no interest to the prosecution, either from my own humble and insignificant position, or the certainty they felt of my conviction.

My advocate rose to demand a delay, even a short

one, pleading most energetically against the precipitancy of a proceeding in which the indictment was but made known the day previous. The president interrupted him roughly, and with an assurance that no circumstance short of the necessity to produce some important evidence not then forthcoming, would induce him to grant a postponement.

M. Baillot replied at once — “Such, Sir, is our case — a witness, whose evidence is of the highest moment, is not to be found — a day or two might enable us to obtain his testimony — it is upon this we ground our hope, our certainty of an acquittal. The court will not, I am certain, refuse its clemency in such an emergency as this?”

“Where is this same witness to be found — is he in Paris — is he in France?”

“We hope in Paris, monsieur le president.”

“And his name?”

“The Abbé D’Ervan.”

A strange murmur ran along the bench of judges at the words, and I could see that some of them smiled in spite of their efforts to seem grave, while the procureur-général did not scruple to laugh outright.

“I believe, Sir,” said he, addressing the president, “that I can accommodate my learned brother with this so much-desired testimony perhaps more speedily — I will not say than he wishes — but than he expects.”

“How is this?” said my advocate, in a whisper to me — “they have this abbé then — has he turned against his party?”

“I know nothing of him,” said I, recklessly: “falsehood and treachery seem so rife here, that it can well be as you say.”

"The Abbé D'Ervan," called a loud voice, and with the words the well-known figure moved rapidly from the crowd and mounted the steps of the platform.

"You are lost," said Baillot, in a low, solemn voice. "It is Mehée de La Touche himself."

Had the words of my sentence rung in my ears I had not felt them more; that name by some secret spell had such terror in it.

"You know the prisoner before you, Sir?" said the president, turning towards the abbé.

Before he could reply my advocate broke in.

"Pardon me, Sir, but previous to the examination of this respectable witness I would ask under what name he is to figure in this process? Is he here the Abbé D'Ervan — the agreeable and gifted frequenter of the Faubourg St. Germain? is he the Chevalier Mauprét — the companion and associate of the house of Bourbon? or is he the no less celebrated and esteemed citizen Mehée de La Touche, whose active exertions have been of such value in these eventful times, that we should think no recompense sufficient for them, had he not been paid by both parties. Yes, Sir," continued he in an altered tone, "I repeat it, we are prepared to show that this man is unworthy of all credit — that he, whose testimony the court now calls, is a hired spy, a bribed calumniator — the instigator to the treason he prosecutes — the designer of the schemes for which other men's blood has paid the penalty. Is this abbé without and gendarme within to be at large in the world, ensnaring the unsuspecting youth of France by subtle and insidious doctrines disguised under the semblance of after-dinner gaiety? Are we to feel that on such evidence as this, the fame, the honour, the life of every

man is to rest? He who earns his livelihood by treason, and whose wealth is gathered in the bloody sawdust beneath the guillotine!"

"We shall not hear these observations longer," said the president, with an accent of severity. "You may comment on the evidence of the witness hereafter, and, if you are able to do so, disprove it. His character is under the protection of the court."

"No, Sir," said the advocate, with energy; "no court however high — no tribunal, beneath that of heaven itself — whose decrees we dare not question — can throw a shield over a man like this. There are crimes which stain the nation they occur in — which, happening in our age, make men sorry for their generation, and wish that they had lived in other times."

"Once more, Sir, I command you to desist," interrupted the president.

"If I dare to dictate to the honourable court," said the so-called abbé, in an accent of the most honied sweetness, and with a smile of the most winning expression — "I would ask permission for the learned gentleman to proceed. These well-arranged paragraphs — this indignation got by heart, must have vent, since they're paid for; and it would save the tribunal the time which must be consumed in listening to them hereafter."

"If," said the advocate, "the coolness and indifference to blood which the headsman exhibits, be a proof of guilt in the victim before him, I could congratulate the prosecution on their witness. But," cried he, in an accent of wild excitement, "great heavens! are we again fallen on such times as to need atrocity like this. Is the terrible ordeal of blood, through which we have

passed to be renewed once more? Is the accusation to be hoarded — the calumnious evidence secreted — the charge held back — till the scaffold is ready — and then the indictment, the slander, the sentence, and the death to follow on one another like the flash and the thunder? Is the very imputation of having heard from a Bourbon, to bear its prestige of sudden death?"

"Silence, Sir," cried the president, to whom the allusion to the Duc D'Enghien was peculiarly offensive, and who saw in the looks of the spectators with what force it told. "You know the prisoner?" said he, turning towards D'Ervan.

"I have that honour, Sir," said he, with a bland smile.

"State to the court the place and the occasion of your first meeting him."

"If I remember correctly, it was in the Palais Royale, at Beauvilliers. There was a meeting of some of the Chouan party arranged for that evening, but from some accident only three or four were present. The sous-lieutenant, however, was one."

"Repeat, as far as your memory serves you, the conduct and conversation of the prisoner during the evening in question?"

In reply the abbé recapitulated every minute particular of the supper; scarcely an observation the most trivial he did not recall and apply, by some infernal ingenuity, to the scheme of the conspiracy. Although, never even in the slightest instance falsifying any speech, he tortured the few words I did say into such a semblance of criminality, that I started, as I heard the interpretation which now appeared so naturally to attach to them.

During all this time my advocate never interrupted him once, but occupied himself in writing as rapidly as he could follow the evidence.

The chance expression which concluded the evening, the hope of meeting soon, was artfully construed into an arranged and recognised agreement that I had accepted companionship amongst them, and formally joined their ranks. From this he passed on to the second charge, respecting the conversation I had overheard at the Tuilleries, and which I so unhappily repeated to Beauvais. This the abbé dwelt upon with great minuteness, as evidencing my being an accomplice, showing how I had exhibited great zeal in the new cause I had embarked in, and affecting to mark how very highly the service was rated by those in whose power lay the rewards of such an achievement.

Then followed the account of my appointment at Versailles, in which I heard, with a sinking heart, how thoroughly even there the toils were spread around me. It appeared, that the reason of the neglect I then experienced, was an order from the minister that I should not be noticed in any way; that the object of my being placed there was to test my fidelity, which already was suspected; that it was supposed such neglect might naturally have the effect of throwing me more willingly into the views of the conspirators, and, as I was watched in every minute particular, of establishing my own guilt and leading to the detection of others. Then came a narrative of his visits to my quarters, in which the omission of all mention of his name in my report was clearly shown as an evidence of my conscious culpability; and to my horror and confusion a new witness was produced, the sentinel Pierre Dulong, who mounted

guard at the gate of the chateau on the morning when I passed the abbé through the park.

With an accuracy beyond my belief he repeated all our conversations, making the dubious hints and dark suggestions which he himself threw out as much mine as his own; and having at length given a full picture of my treacherous conduct, he introduced my intimacy with Beauvais as the crowning circumstance of my guilt. "I shall pause here," said he, with a cool malignity, but ill concealed beneath a look of affected sorrow — "I shall pause here, and, with the permission of the court, allow the accused to make, if he will, a full confession of his criminality; or, if he refuse this, I shall proceed to the disclosure of other circumstances, by which it will be seen that these dark designs met favour and countenance in higher quarters, and among those, too, whose sex, if nothing else, should have removed them beyond the contamination of confederacy with assassination."

"The court," said the president, sternly, "will enter into no compromise of this kind. You are here to give such evidence as you possess — fully, frankly, and without reserve; nor can we permit you to hold out any promises to the prisoner that his confession of guilt can afford a screen to the culpability of others."

"I demand," cried the procureur-général, "a full disclosure from the witness of every thing he knows concerning this conspiracy."

"In that case I shall speak," said the abbé.

At this instant a noise was heard in the hall without; a half murmur ran through the court; and suddenly the heavy curtain was drawn aside, and a loud voice called out —

"In the name of the republic — one and indivisible — an order of council."

The messenger, splashed and covered with mud, advanced through the court, and delivered a packet into the hands of the president, who, having broken the large seals, proceeded leisurely to read it over. At the same moment I felt my arm gently touched, and a small pencil note was slipped into my hand. It ran thus: —

"DEAR SIR — Burke is safe. An order for his transmission before a military tribunal has just been signed by the first consul. Stop all the evidence at once, as he is no longer before the court. The court-martial will be but a formality, and in a few days he will be at liberty. — Yours,

"D'Auvergne,

"Lieutenant-General."

Before I could recover the shock of such glad tidings the president rose, and said —

"In the matter of the accused Burke this court has no longer cognizance, as he is summoned before the tribunal of the army. Let him withdraw, and call on the next case — Auguste Leconisset."

D'Ervan stooped down and whispered a few words to the procureur-général, who immediately demanded to peruse the order of council. To this my advocate at once objected, and a short and animated discussion on the legal question followed. The president, however, ruled in favour of my defender; and at the same instant a corporal's guard appeared, into whose charge I was formally handed over, and marched from the court.

Such was the excited state of my mind — in such a confused whirl were all my faculties, that I knew nothing of what was passing around me; and save that I was ordered to mount into a carriage, and driven along at a rapid pace, I remembered no more. At length we reached the quay Voltaire, and entered the large square of the barrack. The tears burst out and ran down my cheeks, as I looked once more on the emblems of the career I loved. We stopped at the door of a large stone building, where two sentries were posted; and the moment after I found myself the occupant of a small barrack-room, in which, though under arrest, no feature of harsh confinement appeared, and from whose windows I could survey the movement of the troops in the court, and hear the sounds which for so many a day had been the most welcome to my existence.

CHAPTER VIII.

“The Cuirassier.”

ALTHOUGH my arrest was continued with all its strictness, I never heard one word of my transmission before the military tribunal; and a fortnight elapsed, during which I passed through every stage of expectancy, doubt, and at last indifference; no tidings having ever reached me as to what fortune lay in store for me.

The gruff old invalid that carried my daily rations seemed but ill-disposed to afford me any information, even as to the common events without, and seldom made any other reply to my questioning than an erect position as if on parade, a military salute, and “*Connais pas, mon lieutenant*” — a phrase which I actually began to abhor from its repetition. Still his daily visits showed I was not utterly forgotten; while from my window I

had a view of all that went on in the barrack yard. There — for I had neither books nor newspapers — I spent my entire day watching the evolutions of the soldiers: the parade at daybreak, the relieving guards, the drill, the exercise, the very labours of the barrack square — all had their interest for me, and at length I began to know the very faces of the soldiers, and could recognise the bronzed and weather-beaten features of the veterans of the republican armies.

It was a cuirassier regiment, and one that had seen much service: most of the *sous-officiers* and many of the men were decorated; and their helmets bore the haughty device of "*Dix contre un!*" in memory of some battle against the Austrians, where they repulsed and overthrew a force of ten times their own number.

At first their heavy equipments and huge unwieldy horses seemed strange and uncouth to my eyes, accustomed to the more elegant and trim style of a hussar corps, but gradually I fancied there was something almost more soldierlike about them; their dark faces harmonised too with the great black cuirass; and the large massive boot mounting to the middle of the thigh, the long horse-haired helmet, the straight sword, and peculiar, heavy, plodding step, reminded me of what I used to read of the Roman centurion; while the horses, covered with weighty and massive trappings, moved with a warlike bearing, and a tramp as stately as their riders.

When evening came, and set the soldiers free from duty, I used to watch them for hours long, as they sat in little groups and knots about the barrack yard, smoking and chatting — occasionally singing too. Even then, however, their distinctive character was preserved: un-

like the noisy, boisterous merriment of the hussar, the staid cuirassier deemed such levity unbecoming the dignity of his arm of the service, and there reigned a half solemn feature over all their intercourse, which struck me forcibly. I knew not then — as I have learned full well since — how every department of the French army had its distinctive characteristic, and that Napoleon studied and even encouraged the growth of these singular manners to a great extent; doubtless, too, feeling a pride in his own thorough intimacy with their most minute traits, and that facility with which, by a single word, he could address himself to the cherished feeling of a particular corps. And the tact by which the monarch wins over and fascinates the nobles of his court, was here exercised in the great world of a camp, and with far more success too: a phrase, a name, some well-known battle, the date of a victory, would fall from his lips as he rode along the line, and be caught up with enthusiasm by thousands, who felt in the one word a recognition of past services. “Thou” — he always addressed the soldiers in the second person — “thou wert with me at Cairo;” “I remember thee at Arcola,” were enough to reward wounds, suffering, mutilation itself; and he to whom such was addressed became an object of veneration among his fellows.

Certain corps preserved more studiously than others the memories of past achievements — the heir-looms of their glory; and to these Buonaparte always spoke with a feeling of friendship most captivating to the soldier’s heart, and from them he selected the various regiments that composed his “guard.” The cuirassiers belonged to this proud force; and even an unmilitary eye could

mark, in their haughty bearing and assured look, that they were a favoured corps.

Among those with whose faces I had now grown familiar there was one whom I regarded with unusual interest: he seemed to me the very type of his class. He was a man of gigantic size, towering by half a head above the very tallest of his fellows, while his enormous breadth of chest and shoulder actually seemed to detract from his great height. The lower part of his face was entirely concealed by a beard of bright red hair that fell in a huge mass over the breast of his cuirass, and seemed by its trim and fashion to be an object of no common pride to the wearer; his nose was marked by a sabre cut that extended across one entire cheek, leaving a deep blue welt in its track: but saving these traits — wild and savage enough — the countenance was singularly mild and pleasing; he had large and liquid blue eyes, soft and lustrous as any girl's; the lashes, too, were long and falling; and his forehead, which was high and open, was white as snow. I was not long in remarking the strange influence this man seemed to possess over the rest — an ascendancy not in any way attributable to the mark on his sleeve, which proclaimed him a corporal. It seemed as though his slightest word, his least gesture, was attended to; and though evidently taciturn and quiet, when he spoke I could detect in his manner an air of promptitude and command that marked him as one born to be above his fellows. If he seemed such in the idle hours, on parade he was the *beau idéal* of a cuirassier. His great war-horse, seemingly small for the immense proportions of the heavy rider, bounded with each movement of his wrist, as if instinct with the horseman's wishes.

I waited with some impatience for the invalid's arrival, to ask who this remarkable soldier was, certain that I should hear of no common man. He came soon after; and as I pointed out the object of my curiosity, the old fellow drew himself up with pride, and, while a grim effort at a smile crossed his features, replied —

“That ’s Pioche — *Le gros Pioche!*”

“Pioche!” said I, repeating the name aloud, and endeavouring to remember why it seemed well known to me.

“Yes, Pioche,” rejoined he, gruffly. “If Monsieur had ever been in Egypt, the name would scarcely sound so strange in his ears.” And with this sarcasm he hobbled from the room and closed the door, while I could hear him grumbling along the entire corridor, in evident anger at the ignorance that did not know “Pioche.”

Twenty times did I repeat the name aloud, before it flashed across me as the same Madame Lefebvre mentioned at the *soirée* in the palace. It was Pioche who shouldered the brass field-piece, and passed before the general on parade. The gigantic size, the powerful strength, the strange name — all could belong to no other; and I felt as though at once I had found an old acquaintance in the great cuirassier of the guard.

If the prisoner in his lonely cell has few incidents to charm his solitary hours, in return he is enabled by some happy gift to make these the sources of many thoughts. The gleam of light that falls upon the floor, broken by the iron gratings of his window, comes laden with storied fancies of other lands — of far distant countries, where men are dwelling in their native mountains free and happy; forgetful of his prison, the captive

wanders in his fancy through valleys he has seen in boyhood, and with friends to be met no more. He turns gladly to the past, of whose pleasures no adverse fortune can deprive him, and lives over again the happy hours of his youth; and thinks, with a melancholy not devoid of its own pleasure, of what *they* would feel who loved him, could they but see him now: he pictures *their* sympathy and *their* sorrow, and his heart feels lighter, though his eyes drop tears.

In this way the great cuirassier became an object for my thoughts by day and my dreams by night. I fancied a hundred stories, of which he was the hero; and these imaginings served to while away many a tedious hour, and gave me an interest in watching the little spot of earth that was visible from my barred window. It was in one of these reveries I sat one evening when I heard the sounds of feet approaching along the corridor that led to my room; the clank of a sabre and the jingle of spurs sounded not like my gruff visitor. My door was opened before I had time for much conjecture, and General D'Auvergne stood before me.

"Ah! *mon lieutenant*," cried he, gaily, "you have been thinking very hardly of me since we met last, I'm sure; charging me with forgetfulness, and accusing me of great neglect."

"Pardon me, general," said I, hurriedly; "your former kindness, for which I never can be grateful enough, has been always before my mind. I have not yet forgotten that you saved my life; more still — you rescued my name from dishonour."

"Well well; that's all past and gone now: your reputation stands clear at last. Beauvais has surrendered

himself to the authorities at Rouen, and made a full confession of every thing, exculpating you completely in every particular, save the indiscretion of your intercourse with Mehée de La Touche — or, as you know him better, the Abbé D'Ervan."

"And poor Beauvais, what is to become of him?" said I eagerly.

"Have no fears on his account," said he, with something like confusion in his manner; "she — that is, Madame Buonaparte has kindly interested herself in his behalf, and he is to sail for Guadaloupe in a few days — his own proposition and wish."

"And does General Buonaparte know now that I was guiltless?" cried I, with enthusiasm.

"My dear young man," said he, with a bland smile, "I very much fear that the general has little time at this moment to give the matter much of his attention. Great events have happened — are happening while we speak: war is threatening on the side of Austria. Yes, it is true; the camp of Boulogne has received orders to break up; troops are once more on their march to the Rhine; all France is arming."

"Oh, when shall I be free?"

"You are free!" cried he, clapping me gaily on the shoulder: "an amnesty against all untried prisoners for state offences has been proclaimed. At such a moment of national joy —"

"What do you mean?"

"What! and have I not told you my great news? The senate have presented to Buonaparte an address, praying his acceptance of the throne of France — or, in their very words, to make his authority eternal."

"And he?" said I, breathless with impatience to know the result.

"He," continued the general, "has replied as became him, desiring them to state clearly their views — by what steps they propose to consolidate the acquired liberties of the nation; and while avowing that no higher honour or dignity can await him than such as he has already received at the hands of the people — 'yet,' added he, 'when the hour arrives that I can see such to be the will of France, when one voice proclaims it from Alsace to the ocean — from Lisle to the Pyrenees, then shall I be ready to accept the crown of France.'"

The general entered minutely into all the circumstances of the great political change, and detailed the effect which the late conspiracy had had on the minds of the people, and with what terror they contemplated the social disorders that must accrue from the death of their great ruler; how nothing short of a government based on a monarchy, with the right of succession established, could withstand such a terrific crisis. As he spoke, the words I had heard in the Temple crossed my mind, and I remembered that such was the anticipation of the prisoners, as they said among themselves — "When the guillotine has done its work, they'll patch up the timbers into a throne."

"And George Cadoudal and the others?" said I.

"They are no more. Betrayed by their own party, they met death like brave men, and as worthy of a better cause. But let us not turn to so sad a theme. The order for your liberation will be here to-morrow; and as I am appointed to a brigade on active service, I have come to offer you the post of aid-de-camp."

I could not speak; my heart was too full for words.

I knew how great the risk of showing any favour to one who stood in such a position as I did, and I could but look my gratitude, while the tears ran down my cheeks.

“Well,” cried he, as he took my hand in his, “so much is settled. Now to another point, and one in which my frankness must cause you no offence. You are not rich — neither am I; but Buonaparte always gives us opportunities to gather our epaulettes — ay, and find the bullion to make them too. Meanwhile you may want money —”

“No, general,” cried I eagerly; “here are three thousand francs some kind friend sent me. I know not whence they came; and even if I wanted, did not dare to spend them; but now —”

The old man paused, and appeared confused, while he leaned his finger on his forehead, and seemed endeavouring to recall some passing thought.

“Did they come from you, Sir?” said I, timidly.

“No, not from me,” repeated he slowly. “You say you never found out the donor?”

“Never,” said I, while a sense of shame prevented my adding what rose to my mind — could they not be from Mademoiselle de Meudon?

“Well, well,” said he, at length, “be it so. And now till to-morrow: I shall be here at noon, and bring the minister’s order with me. And so, good-bye.”

“Good-bye,” said I, as I stood overcome with happiness. “Let what will come of it, this is a moment worth living for.”

CHAPTER IX.

A morning at "the Tuilleries."

TRUE to his appointment, the general appeared the following day as the hour of noon was striking. He brought the official papers from the minister of war, as well as the formal letter naming me his aid-de-camp. The documents were all perfectly regular, and being read over by the military commission, I was sent for, when my sword was restored to me by the colonel of the regiment in garrison, and I was free once more.

"You have received a severe lesson, Burke," said the general, as he took my arm to lead me towards his carriage, "and all owing to the rashness with which, in times of difficulty and danger, you permitted yourself to form intimacies with men utterly unknown to you. There are epochs when weakness is the worst of evils. You are very young, to be sure, and I trust the experience you have acquired here will serve for a life-time."

"Still, Sir, in all this sad business my faith never wavered; my attachment to the consul was unshaken."

"Had it been otherwise, do you think you had been here now?" said he, drily. "Were not the evidences of your fidelity set off against your folly, what chance of escape remained for you? No, no; she who befriended you so steadily throughout this tangled scheme for your ruin, had never advocated your cause were there reason to suppose you were involved in the conspiracy against her husband's life."

"Who do you mean?" said I. "I scarcely understand."

"The consulesse, of course. But for Madame Buonaparte you were lost: even since I saw you last, I

have learned how deeply interested she became in your fortunes. The letter you received in the Temple came from her, and the enclosure also. And now, with your leave, we can do nothing better than pay our respects to her, and make our acknowledgments for such kindness. She receives at this hour, and will, I know, take your visit in good part."

While I professed my readiness to comply with the suggestion, we drove into the court of the Tuilleries. It was so early that, except the officers of the consul's staff, and some of those on guard, we were the only persons visible.

"We are the first arrivals," said the general, as we drew up at the door of the pavilion. "I am not sorry for it; we shall have our audience over before the crowd assembles."

Giving our names to the usher, we mounted the stairs, and passed on from room to room until we came to a large *salon*, in which seats were formally arranged in a semicircle, an arm-chair somewhat higher than the rest occupying the centre. Several full-length portraits of the generals of the revolutionary armies adorned the walls, and a striking likeness of the consul himself on horseback held the principal place. I had but time to see thus much, when the two sides of the folding-doors were flung open, and Madame Buonaparte, followed by Mademoiselle de Meudon, entered. Scarcely were the doors closed when she said, smiling —

"I heard of your arrival, general, and guessed its purport, so came at once. Monsieur Burke, I am happy to see you at liberty once more."

"That I owe it to you, Madame, makes it doubly dear to me," said I, faltering.

"You must not overrate my exertions on your be-

half," replied the consulesse in a hurried voice. "There was an *amende* due to you for the treatment you met with at Versailles — all Savary's fault; and now I am sincerely sorry I ever suffered myself to become a party to his schemes. Indeed I never guessed them, or I should not. General D'Auvergne has made you his aid-de-camp, he tells me."

"Yes, Madame; my good fortune has showered favours on me most suddenly. Your kindness has been an augury of success in every thing."

She smiled, as if pleased, and then said — "I have a piece of advice to give you, and hope you'll profit by it." Then turning towards the general, who all this time was deeply engaged in talking to Mademoiselle de Meudon, she added —

"Don't you think, general, that it were as well Monsieur Burke should not be in the way of meeting the consul for some short time to come. Is there any garrison duty, or any service away from Paris, where for a week or so he could remain?"

"I have thought of that, Madame," said the general. "Two of the regiments in my brigade are to march to-morrow for the east of France, and I intend my young friend to proceed to Strasbourg at once."

"This is not meant for banishment," said she to me, with a look of much sweetness; "but Buonaparte will now and then say a severe thing, likely to dwell in the mind of him to whom it was addressed long after the sentiment which dictated it has departed. A little time will efface all memory of this sad affair, and then we shall be happy to see you here again."

"Or events may happen soon, Madame, by which he may make his own peace with General Buonaparte."

"True, very true," said she, gravely. "And as to that, general, what advices are there from Vienna?"

She drew the general aside into one of the windows, leaving me alone with Mademoiselle de Meudon. But a minute before, and I had given the world for such an opportunity, and now I could not speak a syllable. She, too, seemed equally confused, and bent over a large vase of moss roses, as if totally occupied by their arrangement. I drew nearer, and endeavoured to address her, but the words would not come, while a hundred gushing thoughts pressed on me, and my heart beat loud enough for me to hear it. At last I saw her lips move, and thought I heard my name; I bent down my head lower; it was her voice, but so low as to be scarcely audible.

"I cannot thank you, Sir, as I could wish," said she, "for the service you rendered me, at the risk of your own life and honour. And though I knew not the dangers you were to incur by my request, I asked it as of the only one I knew who would brave such danger at my asking." She paused for a second, then continued — "The friend of Charles could not but be the friend of Marie de Meudon. There is now another favour I would beg at your hands," said she, while a livid paleness overspread her features.

"Oh, name it!" said I, passionately. "Say, how can I serve you?"

"It is this," said she, with an accent whose solemnity sank into the very recesses of my heart. "We have ever been an unlucky race. De Meudon is but a name for misfortune: not only have we met little else in our own lives, but all who have befriended us have paid the penalty of their friendship. My dear brother

knew this well; and I—” She paused, and then, though her lips moved, the words that followed were inaudible. “There is but one on earth,” continued she, as her eyes, brimful of tears, were turned towards Madame Buonaparte, who still stood talking in the window, “over whose fortunes my affection has thrown no blight. Heaven grant it may be ever so!” Then suddenly, as if remembering herself, she added — “What I would ask is this — that we should meet no more. Nay, nay, look not so harshly at me. If I, alone in the world, ask to be deprived of his friendship who loved my brother so —”

“Oh, if you be alone in the world, feel for one like me, who has not even a country he can call his own? Take not the one hope from my heart, I ask you. Leave me the thought that there is one — but one in all this land, to whom my name, if ever mentioned with praise, can bring one moment’s pleasure; who can say, I knew him. Do not forget that Charles, with his dying breath, said you would be my sister.”

The door of the *salon* opened suddenly, and a name was announced, but in my confusion I heard not what. Madame Buonaparte, however, advanced towards the new arrival with an air of welcome, as she said —

“We were just wishing for you, general. Pray tell us all the news of Paris?”

The person thus addressed was a very tall and singularly handsome man, whose dark eyes and dark whiskers, meeting in the middle of his chin, gave him the appearance of an Italian. He was dressed in a hussar uniform, whose gorgeous braiding of gold was heightened in effect by a blaze of orders and stars that covered the entire breast; the scarlet pantaloons, tight to the leg,

displayed to advantage the perfect symmetry of his form; while his boots of yellow morroco, bound and tasselled with gold, seemed the very coquetry of military costume: a sabre, the hilt actually covered with precious stones, clanked at his side, and the *aigrette* of his plumed hat was a large diamond. There was something almost theatrical in the manner of his approach, as with a stately step and a deep bow he took Madame Buona-parte's hand and kissed it; a ceremony he repeated to Mademoiselle de Meudon, adding as he did so —

“And my fair *Rose de Provence* — more beautiful than ever! how is she?”

“What flattery is he whispering, Marie?” said the consulesse, laughing. “Don't you know, general, that I insist on all the compliments here being paid to myself. What do you think of my robe? your judgment is said to be perfect?”

“Charming — absolutely charming!” said he, in an attitude of affected admiration. “It is only such taste as yours could have devised any thing so beautiful. Yet the roses — I half think I should have preferred them white.”

“You can scarcely imagine that vain fellow, with the long ringlets, the boldest soldier of the French army,” said the general in a low whisper, as he drew me to one side.

“Indeed! and who is he then?”

“You a hussar, and not know him! Why, Murat, to be sure.”

“So then, Madame, all my news of Monsieur Talley-rand's ball, it seems, is stale already. You've heard that the Russian and Austrian ministers both sent apologies?”

“Oh, dear!” said she, sighing, “have I not heard

it a thousand times, and every reason for it canvassed, until I wished both of their excellencies at — at Madame Lefebvre's dinner party."

"That was perfect," cried Murat aloud; "a regular bivouac in a *salon*. You'd think that the silver dishes and the gilt candelabras had just been captured from the enemy, and that the *cuisine* was made by beat of drum."

"The general is an honest man and a brave officer," said D'Auvergne, somewhat nettled at the tone Murat spoke in.

"No small boast, either," replied the other, shrugging his shoulders carelessly, "in the times and the land we live in."

"And what of Cambacérès' *soirée*? how did it go off?" interposed Madame Buonaparte, anxious to relieve the awkward pause that followed.

"Like every thing in his hotel — sombre, stately, and stupid; the company all dull, who would be agreeable every where else; the tone of the reception laboured and affected; and every one dying to get away to Fouché's. It was his second night for receiving."

"Was that pleasanter then?"

"A hundred times. There are no parties like his: one meets every body. It is a kind of neutral territory for the Faubourg and the Jacobin — the partizan of our people, and the followers of heaven knows who. Fouché slips about, whispering the same anecdote in confidence to every one, and binding each to secrecy. Then, as every one comes there to spy his neighbour, the host has an excellent opportunity of pumping all in turn; and while they all persist in telling him nothing but lies, they forget that with him no readier road could lead to the detection of truth."

"The consul!" said a servant aloud, as the door opened and closed with a crash, and Buonaparte, dressed in the uniform of the chasseurs of the guard, and covered with dust, entered.

"Was Decres here?" and then, without waiting for a reply, continued — "It is settled — all finally arranged; I told you, Madame, the 'pear was ripe.' I start to-morrow for Boulogne. You, Murat, must accompany me — D'Auvergne, your division will march the day after. Who is this gentleman?"

This latter question, in all its abruptness, was addressed to me, while a dark and ominous frown settled on his features.

"My aid-de-camp, Sir," said the old general hastily, hoping thus to escape further inquiry.

"Your name, Sir?" said the consul harshly, as he fixed his piercing eyes upon me.

"Burke, Sir; *sous-lieutenant* —"

"Of the eighth hussars," continued he. "I know the rest, Sir. Every conspiracy is made up of knaves and fools: you figured in the latter capacity. Mark me, Sir; your name is yet to make — the time is approaching when you may have the opportunity: still, General D'Auvergne, it is not in the ranks of a Chouan plot I should have gone to select my staff."

"Pardon me, Sir; but this young man's devotion to you —"

"Is on record, general; I have seen it in Mehée de La Touche's own writing," added Buonaparte, with a sneer. "Give me the fidelity, Sir, that has no tarnish — like your own, D'Auvergne. Go, Sir," said he, turning to me, while he waved his hand towards the door.

"It will need all your bravery and all your heroism to

make me acquit General D'Auvergne of an act of folly."

I hung my head in shame, and with a low reverence and a tottering step moved from the room and closed the door behind me.

I had just reached the street when the general overtook me.

"Come, come, Burke," said he, "you must not mind this. I heard Lannes receive a heavier reproof, because he only carried away three guns of an Austrian battery, when there were four in all."

"Buonaparte never forgets, Sir," muttered I between my teeth, as the well-remembered phrase crossed my mind.

"Then there's but one thing to do, my boy; give him a pleasanter *souvenir* to look back upon. Besides," added he in a lower tone, "the general is ever harsh at the moment of victory; and such is the present. In a few days more France will have an Emperor: the senate has declared, and the army wait but for the signal to salute their monarch. And now for your own duties. Make your arrangements to start to-night by post for Mayence: I shall join you there in about ten days. You are, on your arrival, to report yourself to the general in command, and receive your instructions from him. A great movement towards the Rhine is in contemplation, but of course every thing awaits the course of political changes in Paris."

Thus conversing, we reached the corner of the Rue de Rohan, where the general's quarters were.

"You'll be here then punctually at eight to-night," said he, and we parted.

I walked on for some time without knowing which

way I went, the strange conflict of my mind so completely absorbed me — hope and fear, pride, shame, and sorrow alternately swaying me with their impulses — I noticed not the gay and splendid streets through which I passed, nor the merry groups which poured along. At length I remembered that but a few hours remained for me to make some purchases necessary for my journey. My new uniform as aid-de-camp too was yet to be ordered; and by some strange hazard I was exactly at the corner of the Rue de Richelieu on the Boulevard, at the very shop of Monsieur Crillac, where, some months before, began the singular current of ill luck that had followed me ever since. A half shudder of fear passed across me for a second as I thought of all the dangers I had gone through, and the next moment I felt ashamed of my cowardice, and pushing the glass door before me, walked in. I looked about me for the well-known face of the proprietor, but he was no where to be seen. A lean and wasted little old man, hung round with tapes and measures, was the only person there. Saluting me with a most respectful bow, he asked my orders.

“I thought this was Crillac’s,” said I, hesitatingly.

A shrug of the shoulders and a strange expression of the eyebrows was the only reply.

“I remember he lived here some eight or ten months ago,” said I again, curious to find out the meaning of the man’s ignorance of his predecessor.

“Monsieur has been away from Paris for some time then?” was the cautious question of the little man, as he peered curiously at me.

“Yes; I have been away,” said I, after a pause.

“Monsieur knew Crillac probably when he was here?”

“I never saw him but once,” said I.

“Ha!” cried he, after a long silence. “Then you probably never heard of the Chouan conspiracy to murder the chief consul and overthrow the government, nor of their trial at the Palais de Justice?”

I nodded slightly, and he went on.

“Monsieur Crillac’s evidence was of great value in the proceeding: he knew Jules de Polignac and Charles de la Rivière well; and but for him San Victor would have escaped.”

“And what has become of him since?”

“He is gone back to the south; he has been promoted.”

“Promoted! — what do you mean?”

“*Parbleu!* it is easy enough to understand: he was made *chef de bureau* in the department of —”

“What! — was he not a tailor then?”

“A tailor! — no,” said the little man, laughing heartily; “he was a *mouchard*, a police spy, who knew all the royalist party well at Bourdeaux, and Fouché brought him up here to Paris, and established him in this house. Ah, *mon Dieu!*” said he, sighing, “he had a better and a pleasanter occupation than cutting out pantaloons.”

Without heeding the reiterated professions of the little tailor of his desire for my patronage, I strolled out again, lost in reflection, and sick to the heart of a system based on such duplicity and deception.

* * * * *

At last in Mayence. What a change of life was this to me. A large fortress garrisoned by twelve thousand men, principally artillery, awaited here the orders of the consul; but whither the destination before

them, or what the hour when the word to march was to summon them, none could tell. Meanwhile the activity of the troops was studiously kept up; battering trains of field artillery were exercised day after day; the men were practised in all the movements of the field; while the foundries were unceasingly occupied in casting guns, and the furnaces rolled forth their myriads of shell and shot. Staff officers came and went; expresses arrived from Paris, and orderlies, travel-stained and tired, galloped in from the other fortified places near, but still no whisper came to say where the great game of war was to open — for what quarter of the globe the terrible carnage was destined. From daylight till dark no moment of our time was unoccupied; reports innumerable were to be furnished on every possible subject, and frequently it was far in the night ere I returned to rest. To others this unbroken monotony may have been wearisome and uninteresting; to me each incident bore upon the great cause I gloried in — the dull rumble of the caissons, the heavy clattering of the brass guns were music to my ear, and I never wearied of the din and clamour that spoke of preparation. Such was indeed the pre-occupation of my thoughts, that I scarcely marked the course of events which were even then passing, or the mighty changes that already moved across the destinies of France. To my eyes the conqueror of Lodi needed no title — what sceptre could equal his own sword? France might desire in her pride to unite her destinies with such a name as his, but he — the general of Italy and Egypt — could not be exalted by any dignity. Such were my boyish fancies; and as I indulged them, again there grew up the hope within me that a brighter day was yet to beam on my own

fortunes, when I should do that which even in his eyes might seem worthy. His very reproaches stirred my courage and nerved my heart. There was a combat—there was a battle-field before me, in which my whole fame and honour lay; and could I but succeed in making him confess that he had wronged me, what pride was in the thought. Yes, said I again and again, a devotion to him such as I can offer must have success: one who like me has neither home, nor friends, nor country to share his heart, must have room in it for one passion, and that shall be glory. She whom alone I could have loved—I dared not confess I did love her—never could be mine. Life must have its object, and what so noble as that before me. My very dreams caught up the infatuation of my waking thoughts—and images of battle, deadly contests, and terrific skirmishes were constantly passing before me; and I actually went my daily rounds of duty buried in these thoughts, and lost to every thing save what ministered to my excited imagination.

We who lived far away on the distant frontier could but collect from the journals the state of excitement and enthusiasm into which every class of the capital were thrown by Napoleon's elevation to the monarchy. Never, perhaps, in any country did the current of popular favour run in a stream so united. The army hailed him as their brother of the sword, and felt the proud distinction that the chief of the empire was chosen from their ranks. The civilian saw the restoration of monarchy as the pledge of that security which alone was wanting to consolidate national prosperity. The clergy, however they may have distrusted his sincerity, could not but acknowledge that to his influence was

owing the return of the ancient faith; and save the Vendéans broken and discomfited, and the scattered remnants of the Jacobin party, discouraged by the fate of Moreau, none raised a voice against him. A few of the old republicans, among whom was Carnot, did, it is true, proclaim their dissent; but so moderately, and with 'so little of partizan spirit, as to call forth an eulogium on their honourable conduct from Napoleon himself.

The mighty change which was to undo all the long and arduous struggles for liberty, which took years in their accomplishment, was effected in one burst of national enthusiasm. Surrounded by nations on whose friendship they dared not reckon — at war with their most powerful enemy, England, France saw herself dependent on the genius of one great man; and beheld, too, the formidable conspiracy for his assassination, coupled with the schemes against her own independence. He became thus indissolubly linked with her fortunes — self-interest and gratitude pointed both in the same direction to secure his services; and the imperial crown was indeed less the reward of the past, than the price of the future. Even they who loved him least, felt that in his guidance there was safety; and that, without him, the prospect was dark, and dreary, and threatening. Another element which greatly contributed to the same effect, was the social ruin caused by the revolution — the destruction of all commerce — the forfeiture of property had thrown every class into the service of the government. Men gladly advocated a change by which the ancient forms of a monarchy might be restored, and with them the long train of patronage and appointments, their inevitable attendants.

Even the old families of the kingdom hailed the return of an order of things which might include them in the favours of the crown; and the question now was, what rank or class should be foremost in tendering their allegiance to the new sovereign. We should hesitate ere we condemn the sudden impulse by which many were driven at this period. Confiscation and exile had done much to break the spirit of even the hardiest; and the very return to the institutions in which all their ancient prejudices were involved, seemed a pledge against the tyranny of the mass.

As for Napoleon himself, each step in his proud career seemed to evoke the spirit necessary to direct it — the resources of his mighty intellect appeared with every new drain on them, only the more inexhaustible. Animated through his whole life by the one great principle, the aggrandizement of France — his vast intelligence gathering strength with his own increase of power, enabled him to cultivate every element of national greatness, and mould their energies to his will, till at length the nation seemed but one vast body, of which he was the heart, the impulse, that sent the life-blood bounding through all its arteries, and with whose beating pulses every, even the most remote portion throbbed in unison.

The same day that established the empire, declared the rank and dignity accorded to each member of the royal family, with the titles to be borne by the ministers and other high officers of the crown. The next step was the creation of a new order of nobility — one which, without ancient lineage or vast possessions, could still command the respect and admiration of all — the marshals of France. The names of Berthier, Murat, Augereau,

Masséna, Bernadotte, Ney, Soult, Lannes, Mortier, Davoust, Bessières, were enough to throw a blaze of lustre on the order; and had it not been for the omission of Macdonald's name in this glorious list, public enthusiasm had been complete; but then he was the friend of Moreau, and Buonaparte "did not forgive."

The restoration of the old titles, so long in abeyance, the return to the pomp and state of monarchy, seemed like a national *fête*, and Paris became the scene of a splendid festivity and a magnificence unknown for many years past. It was necessary for the new court to make its impression on the world, and the endeavour was made by luxury and splendour, to eclipse the grandeur which in the days of the Bourbons was an heirloom of royalty. To this end functionaries and officers of the palace were appointed in myriads — brilliant and costly uniforms adopted — courtly titles and ceremonial observances increased without end — and etiquette, carried to a pitch of strictness which no former reign had ever exhibited, now regulated every department of the state.

While, however, nothing was too minute or too trivial, provided that it bore even in the remotest way on the re-establishment of that throne he had so long and so ardently desired, Napoleon's great mind was eagerly bent upon the necessity of giving to the empire one of those astounding evidences of his genius, which marked him as above all other men. He wished to show to France that the crown had devolved upon the rightful successor to Charlemagne, and to prove to the army that the purple mantle of royalty could not conceal the spur of the warrior; and thus while all believed him occupied with the ordinary routine of the period, his ambitious thoughts were carrying him away across the

Pyrenees, or beyond the Danube, to battle-fields of even greater glory than ever, and to conquests prouder than all his former ones.

The same power of concentrativeness that he so eminently possessed himself, he imparted, as if by magic, to his government. Paris was France. To the capital flocked all whose talent or zeal prompted them to seek for advancement. The emperor was not only the fountain of all honour, but of all emolument and place. No patronage was exercised without his permission, and none was conferred without the conviction that some staunch adherent was secured, whose friendship was ratified, or whose former enmity was conciliated.

Thus passed the year that followed his accession to the throne — that brilliant pageant of a nation's enthusiasm rendering tribute to the majesty of intellect. At length the period of inaction seemed drawing to a close; and a greater activity in the war department, and a new levy of troops, betokened the approach of some more energetic measures. Men whispered that the English expedition was about to sail, and reinforcements of ammunition and artillery were despatched to the coast; when suddenly came the news of Trafalgar: Villeneuve was beaten — his fleet annihilated — the whole combination of events destroyed — and England, again triumphant on the element she had made her own, hurled defiance at the threats of her enemy. The same despatch that brought the intelligence to Mayence told us to be in readiness for a movement, but when or where to none of us could surmise. Still detachments from various corps stationed about were marched into the garrison, skeleton regiments commanded to make up their deficiencies, and a renewed energy was every where

perceptible. At last, towards the middle of August, I was sent for by the general in command of the fortress, and informed that General D'Auvergne had been promoted to the command of a cavalry brigade stationed at Coblenz.

"You are to join him there immediately," continued he; "but here is a note from himself, which probably will explain every thing."

And with that he handed me a small sealed letter. It was the first, save on purely regimental matters, I had ever received from him, and somehow I felt unusually anxious about its contents. It ran in these words: —

"MY DEAR B. — His majesty has just sent for me, and, most graciously esteeming me not yet too old to serve him, has given me the command of a brigade — late the 12th, now to be called 'D'Auvergne's Cavalry.' I would willingly have mentioned your name for promotion, to which your zeal and activity would well entitle you, but deemed it better to let your claim come before the emperor's personal notice — which an opportunity will, I trust, soon permit of its doing. His majesty, with a kindness which the devotion of a life could not repay, has also interested himself personally for me in a quarter where only his influence could have proved successful — but the explanation of this I reserve for your arrival. And now request that you will lose no time in repairing to Paris — where I shall expect to see you by Tuesday. — Yours,

"D'AUVERGNE,

"Lieut.-General."

This strange paragraph puzzled me not a little; nor could I by any exercise of ingenuity find out even a plausible meaning for it. I read it over and over, weighing and canvassing every word, and torturing each syllable—but all to no purpose. Had the general been some youthful but unhappy lover, to forward whose suit the emperor had lent his influence, then had I understood the allusion, but with the old weather-beaten officer, whose hairs were blanched with years and service, the very thought of such a thing was too absurd. Yet what could be the royal favour so lavishly praised: he needed no intercession with the empress—at least I remembered well how marked the kindness of Josephine was towards him in former times. But to what use guessing! Thoughts by long revolving, often become only the more entangled, and we lose sight of the real difficulty in canvassing our own impressions concerning it. And so from this text did I spin away a hundred fancies that occupied me the whole road to Paris, nor left me till the din and movement of the great capital banished all other reflections.

Arrangement had been made for my reception at the Rue de Rohan, but I learned that the general was at Versailles with the court, and only came up to Paris once or twice each week. His direction to me was, to wait for his arrival, and not to leave the city on any account.

With what a strange feeling did I survey the palace of the Tuilleries—the scene of my first moment of delighted admiration of her I now loved—and alas, of my first step in the long catalogue of my misfortunes. I lingered about the gardens with a fascination I could not account for; my destiny seemed somehow linked

with the spot, and I could not reason myself out of the notion but that there, in that great pile, the fate of my whole life was to be decided.

My entire day was passed in this way, and evening found me seated on one of the benches near the windows of the pavilion, where I watched the lustres in the long gallery as one by one they burst into light, and saw the gilt candelabras twinkling as each taper was illuminated. It was an evening reception of the emperor, and I could mark the vast assemblage, in every variety of uniform, that filled the *salons*. At length the drums beat for strangers to leave the gardens, the patrols passed on, and gradually the crowded walks became thinner and thinner, the sounds of the drum grew fainter, and finally the whole space became still and noiseless; not a voice was to be heard, not a step moved on the gravel. I knew that the gates were now locked, and yet I staid on, glad to be alone, and at leisure to dream away among the fancies that kept ever rising to my mind, and follow out the trains of thought that ever and anon opened before me.

As the hour grew later, and the *salons* filled more and more, the windows were opened along the terrace to give air, and I could hear the continued murmur of hundreds of voices conversing, while at times the sound of laughter rose above the rest. What a rush of thoughts came on me as I sat; how did I picture to myself the dark intrigues, the subtle plots of wily diplomatists, the bold and daring aspirations of the brave soldiers, the high hopes, and the ambitious yearnings, that were all commingled there — grouped around him whose dreams were of universal empire. While I mused the night glided on, and the solemn sound of the bell of

Notre Dame proclaimed midnight. I now could mark that the *salons* were thinning, and the unceasing din of carriages in the "place" announced the departure of the guests. In little more than half an hour the great gallery was empty, and but a few groups remained in the apartments adjoining; even they soon departed, and then I could see the servants passing from room to room extinguishing the lights, and soon the great facade of the palace was wrapped in darkness: a twinkling light appeared here and there for some time, but it too went out. The night was calm, and still, and sultry; not a leaf stirred, and the heavy tread of the sentinels, as they paced the marble vestibule, was heard plainly where I stood.

How full of thought to me was that vast pile, now shrouded in the gloom of night. What bold ambitious deeds — what dreams of empire had not been conceived there. The great of other days, indeed, entered little into my mind, as I remembered it was the home of him, the greatest of them all. How terrible, too, it was to think, that within that now silent palace, which seemed sleeping with the tranquil quiet of an humble cottage, the dreadful plans which were to convulse the world, to shake thrones and dynasties, to make of Europe a vast battle-field, were now devising. The masses of dark cloud that hung heavily in the air, obscuring the sky, and shutting out every star, seemed to my fevered imagination an augury of evil; and the oppressive, loaded atmosphere, though perfumed with the odour of flowers, sunk heavily on the spirits. Again the hour rung out, and I remembered that the gates of the garden were now closed for the night, and that I should remain where I was till daylight liberated me.

My mind was, however, too full of its own thoughts to make me care for sleep, and I strolled along the gloomy walks lost in reverie.

CHAPTER X.

A night in the Tuilleries gardens.

As the night wore on, I remembered that once when a boy at the Polytechnique, I longed to penetrate one of the little enclosures which fenced the small flower-gardens beside the palace, and which were railed up from the public promenades by a low iron railing. The bouquets of rich flowers that grew there, sparkling with the light dew of a little *jet d'eau* that fell in rain drops over them, had often tempted my young heart; but still, in the day-time such a transgression would have been immediately punished. Now, with the strange caprice which so often prompts us in after years to do that which in youth we wished, but could not do, I wandered towards the gardens, and crossing over the low fence, entered the parterre: each step awoke the sleeping perfume of the flowers, and I strolled along the velvet turf until I reached a low bench, half covered with honeysuckle and woodbine. Here I threw myself down, and, wrapping my cloak around me, resolved to rest till day-break. The stillness of all around, the balmy air, and my own musings, gradually conspired to make me drowsy, and I slept.

My sleep could not have been long, when I was awakened by a noise close beside me. I started up, and looked about, and for some seconds I could scarcely credit that I was not still dreaming. Not more than a dozen paces from where I lay, and where before the

dark walls of the palace rose in unbroken blackness, was now a chamber, brilliantly lighted by several wax-lights that stood on a table. At the window, which opened to the ground, and led into the garden, stood the figure of a man, but from his position before the light I could not remark more than that he wore epaulettes. It was the noise of the opening jalousies which awoke me; and I could see his hand stretched out, as if to ascertain whether or not it was raining. At the table I could perceive another person, on whose uniform the light fell strongly, displaying many a cross and star, which twinkled with every stir he made. He was busily engaged writing, and never lifted his head from the paper. The walls of the room were covered with shelves, filled with books; and on the chairs about, and even on the floor, lay maps and drawings in every disorder; a sword and belt, as if just taken off, lay on the table among the writing materials, and a cocked hat beside them. While I noticed these details my very heart was chill within me. The dark figure at the window, which stirred not, seemed as if turned towards me, and more than once I almost thought I could see his eyes bent upon me. This was, however, but the mere suggestion of my own fears, for in the shade of the seat no light whatever fell, and I was perfectly concealed.

In the deep stillness I could hear the scraping sound of the pen on the paper, and scarcely dared to breathe, lest I should cause discovery, when the figure retired from the window, and moved towards the table; for some minutes he appeared to stoop over a large map, which lay outstretched before him, and across which I could see his finger moving rapidly. Suddenly he stood

erect, and in a voice which even now rings within my heart, said — “It must be so, Duroc; by any other route Bernadotte will be too late!” What was the reply I know not, such terror now fell over me. It was the emperor himself who spoke. It was he who the instant before was standing close beside me at the window; and thus, a second time in my life, did I become the unwilling eavesdropper of the man I most feared and respected of all the world. Before I could summon resolution to withdraw, Napoleon spoke again. “Hardenberg,” said he, in a tone of contemptuous passion — “Hardenberg is but a Prussian; the event will satisfy *his* scruples; besides, if they do talk about invasion of territory, you can reply, the Margraves were always open to belligerent parties; remind them of what took place in '96, and again in 1800; though, *parbleu*, the souvenir may not be so pleasant a one; protract the discussion, at all events, Duroc — time! — time!” Then added he, after a brief pause — “Let them advance, and they'll never repass the Danube; and if they wait for me, I'll fall upon them here — here between Ulm and Augsburg. You must, however, start for Berlin at once.” At this instant a heavy hand fell upon my shoulder, and, passing down my arm, seized me by the wrist. I started back, and beheld a dragoon, for so his helmet and cloak bespoke him, of enormous stature, who, motioning me to silence, led me softly and with noiselessly step along the flower-beds, as if fearful of attracting the emperor's notice. My limbs tottered beneath me as I went, for the dreadful imputation an accident might fix on me, stared me with all its awful consequences. Without a word on either side we reached the little railing, crossed it, and regained the open park, when

the soldier, placing himself in front of me, said in a deep low voice —

“Your name — who are you?”

“An officer of the huitième regiment of hussars,” said I, boldly.

“We shall see that presently,” replied he, in a tone of disbelief. “How came you here?”

In a few words I explained how, having remained too late in the garden, I preferred to pass my night on a bench, to the unpleasantness of being brought up before the officer on duty, adding, that it was only on the very moment of his coming that I awoke.

“I know that,” interrupted he, in a less surly voice. “I found you sleeping, and feared to awake you suddenly, lest in the surprise a word or a cry should escape you — one syllable had cost your head.”

In the tone of these last few words there was something I thought I could recognise, and resolving at a bold venture in such an emergency as I found myself placed, I said at a hazard —

“The better fortune mine, that I fell into the hands of a kind as well as of a brave soldier — the Corporal Pioche.”

“*Sacristi!* You know me then!” cried he, thunder-struck.

“To be sure I do. Could I be an aid-de-camp to the General D’Auvergne, and not have heard of Pioche?”

“An aid-de-camp of the general,” said he, starting back, as he carried his hand to the salute. “Pardon, *mon officier*; but you know that duty —”

“Quite true; it was all my own indiscretion. And now, Pioche, if you’ll keep me company here till daybreak — it cannot be far off now — the light will

soon satisfy you that my account of myself is a true one."

"Willingly, Sir," said the gruff cuirassier: "my patrol is, to watch the parterres from the pavilion to the allée yonder; and, if you please, we'll take up our quarters on this bench."

They who know not the strange mixture of deference and familiarity of which the relation between officer and soldier is made up in the French service, will perhaps wonder at the tone of almost equality in which we now conversed. But such is the case; the revolutionary armies acknowledged no other gradations of rank than such as the service conferred, nor any degree of superiority save that derivable from greater ability, or more daring heroism; and although no troops more implicitly obeyed the commands of their officers, the occasion of discipline over, a perfect feeling of equality reigned amongst all, whether they wore the epaulettes of colonel, or carried a musket in the ranks. With time, and the changes the consulate had introduced, much of this excessive familiarity was suppressed; still it was no uncommon thing to hear the humble rank and file address the general of division as "thou" — the expression of closest friendship, probably dating from the hours of schoolboy attachment: nor was the officer of rank thought less of, because in the hours of off-duty he mixed freely with those who had been his companions through life, and talked with them as brothers. It is probable that in no other nation such a course could have been practised, without a total subversion of all respect, and the ruin of all habits of order. The Frenchman is, however, essentially military — not merely warlike, like

the inhabitants of Great Britain, his mind ever inclines to the details of war as an art. It is in generalship he glories, not the mere conflict of force; and the humblest soldier of the army takes an interest in the great game of tactics, which in any other people would be quite incredible. Hence, he submits to the control which otherwise he could not endure; for this, he yields to command at the hands of one, who, although his equal in all other respects, he here acknowledges as his superior. He knows, too, that the grade of officer is open to merit alone, and he feels that the epaulette may be his own one day. Such causes as these, constantly in operation, could not fail to raise the "*morale*" of an army; nor can we wonder that from such a source were derived many, if not most of the great names that formed the marshals of France.

Again, to this military spirit the French owe the perfection of their tirailleur force — the consummate skill of independent parties, of which every campaign gave evidence. Napoleon found this spirit in the nation, and spared nothing to give it its fullest development. He quickly saw to what height of enthusiasm a people could be brought, to whom a cross or a decoration, an epaulette or a sabre of honour, were deemed the ample rewards of every daring and of every privation; and never in any age, or in any country, was chivalry so universally spread over the wide surface of a people. With them, rank claimed no exemption from fatigue or suffering. The officer fared little better than the soldier, on a march; in a battle, he was only more exposed to danger; by daring only could he win his way upwards: and an emulative ardour was continually maintained, which was ever giving to the world instances of indi-

vidual heroism, far more brilliant than all the famed achievements of the crusaders.

This brief digression, unnecessary perhaps to many of my readers, may serve to explain to others how naturally our conversation took the easy tone of familiar equality; nor will they be surprised at the abrupt question of the cuirassier, as he said —

“*Milles tonnerres!* lieutenant, was it from your liking the post of danger you selected that bench yonder?”

“The choice was a mere accident.”

“An accident, *morbleu!*” said he, with a low laugh. “That was what Lasalle called it at the Adige, when the wheel came off the eight-pounder in the charge, and the enemy carried off the gun. ‘An accident,’ said the ‘petit caporal’ to him. I was close by when he said it. Will your friends in Paris call it an accident if the ‘*Ordre du Jour*’ to-morrow, condemn you to be shot? I know him well,” continued Pioche — “that I do; I was second bombardier with him at Toulon — ay, and at Cairo too. I mind well the evening he came over to our quarters — poor enough we were at the time — no clothes — no rations. I was cook to our division, but somehow there was little duty in my department, till one day the vivandière’s ass — a brave beast he was, too, before provisions fell short — a spent shot took him in the flank, and killed him on the spot. *Sacristi!* what damage it did — all the canteens were smashed to atoms — horn goblets and platters knocked to pieces; but worst of all, a keg of true Nantz was broached, and every drop lost. Poor Madame Gougou, she loved that ass as if he had been one of the regiment; and though we all offered her assignats on our pay, for a month each, to give us the carcase,

she wouldn't do it. No, faith! she would have him buried, and with funeral honours. *Parbleu!* it was a whim! but the poor thing was in grief, and we could not refuse her. I commanded the party," continued Pioche, "and a long distance we had to march, lest the shots might be heard in the quartier général. Well, we had some trouble in getting the poor soul away from the grave. *Sacristi!* she took it so much to heart, I thought she'd have masses said for him; but we did succeed at last, and before dawn we were all within the camp as if nothing had happened. The whole of that day, however, the ass was never out of our minds. It was not grief — no! no! — don't think that — we were all thinking of what a sin it was to have him buried there — such a fine beast as he was — and not a pound of meat to be had, if you were to offer a nine-pounder gun for it. 'He is never the worse for his funeral,' said I; 'remember, boys, how well preserved he was in brandy before he was buried. Let's have him up again! No sooner was night come, than we set off for the place where we laid him, and in less than two hours I was busily employed in making a delicious *salmi* of his haunch. *Milles bombes!* I think I have the smell of it before me; it was *gibier*, and the gravy was like a *purée*. We were all pleasantly seated round the fire, watching every turn of the roast, when, *crack!* I heard the noise of the patrol bringing his gun to the present, and before we had time to jump up, the 'petit caporal' was upon us — he was mounted on a little dark Arab, and dressed in his grey surtout.

"'What's all this here?' cried he, pulling up short, while the barb sniffed the air, just as if he guessed what the meat was. 'Who has stolen this sheep?'

“‘It is not a sheep, general,’ said I, stepping forward, and trying to hide the long ladle I was basting with.

“‘Not a sheep — then it is an ox, mayhap, or a calf,’ said he again, with an angry look.

“‘Neither, general,’ said I; ‘it was a — a — a beast of our division.’

“‘A beast of your division! — what does that mean? No trifling, mind. Out with it at once. What’s this? Where did it come from?’

“‘An ass, may it please you, Sir,’ said I, trembling all over, for I saw he was in a rare passion; and as he repeated the word after me, I told him the whole story, and how we could not suffer such capital prog to be eaten by any other than good citizens of the republic.

“While I was telling him so much, the rest stood round terrified; they could not even turn the joint, though it was burning, and to say truth, I thought myself we were all in a bad way, when suddenly he burst into a fit of laughing, and said —

“‘What part of France do these fellows come from?’

“‘Alsace, mon général,’ was the answer from every one.

“‘I thought so — I thought so,’ said he. ‘Sybarites — all.

“‘No, mon général — grenadiers of the fourth — Milhaud’s brigade,’ said I; and with that he turned away, and we could hear him laughing long after he galloped off. I saw he mistook us,” said Pioche, “and that he could not be angry with the old fourth.”

“You must have seen a great deal of hardship, Pioche?” said I, as he came to a pause; and wishing to draw him on, to speak more of his campaigns.

"*Ma foi!* there were few who saw service from '92 to '97, had not their share of it; but they were brave times too; every battle had its day of promotion afterwards. Le petit caporal would ride down the ranks with his staff, looking for this one, and asking for that. 'Where's the adjutant of the sixth?' 'Dead, mon général.' 'Where's the colonel of the voltigeurs?' 'Badly wounded.' 'Carry him this sabre of honour.' 'Who fell over the Austrian standard, and carried away the fragment of the drapeau?' 'One of my fellows, general; here he is.' 'And what is your name, my brave fellow?'"

The corporal paused here, and drew a deep breath; and after a few seconds' pause, added in altered tone — "*Sacristi!* they were fine times."

"But what did he say to the soldier that took the colours?" asked I, impatiently. "Who was he?"

"It was I," replied Pioche himself, in a deep voice, where pride and devotion struggled powerfully together.

"You, Pioche — indeed! Well, what said the general when he saw you?"

"'Ah, Pioche,' said he, gaily — 'my old friend of Toulouse.'"

"'Yes, general,' said I, 'we've had some warm work together.'"

"'True, Pioche, and may again, perhaps; but you've been made a corporal since that; what am I to do for you now?'"

"This was a puzzling question, and I did not know how to answer it; and he repeated it before I could make up my mind.

"'Is there nothing, then, in which I can be of use to Corporal Pioche?'"

“‘Yes, mon général,’ said I, ‘there is.’”

“‘Speak it out, man, then; what is it?’”

“‘I wish, then, you’d rate the commissary-general of our division for one blunder he’s ever making. The powder they serve us out is always wet, and our bread is as hard as *mitraille*: neither bayonets nor teeth will last for ever, you know, general.’ And he burst out a laughing before I finished.”

“‘Rest assured, Pioche, I’ll look to this,’ said he, and he kept his word.”

“‘But why didn’t you ask for promotion?’” said I; “‘what folly, was it not, to throw away such a chance? You might have been an officer ere this.’”

“‘No,’” replied he, with a sorrowful shake of the head; “‘that was impossible.’”

“‘But why so? Buonaparte knew you well; he often noticed you.’”

“‘True—all true,’” said he, more sadly than before; “‘but then—’”

“‘What, then?’” asked I, with more of interest than delicacy at the moment.

“‘I never learned to read,’” said Pioche, in a low voice, which trembled with agitation, while he drew his swarthy hand across his eyes, and was silent.

The few words so spoken thrilled most powerfully within me. I saw that I had awakened the saddest thoughts of the poor fellow’s heart, and would have given worlds to be able to recall my question. Here then was the corroding sorrow of his life—the grief that left its impress on his stern features, and tinged with care the open brow of the brave soldier. Each moment our silence was prolonged, made it still more

poignant, but I made an effort to break it, and happily with success.

"After all, Pioche," said I, laying my hand on his arm, "I would willingly exchange my epaulettes for these stripes on your sleeve: to have had Buonaparte speak to me as he has done to you, that was a prouder distinction than any other, and will be a fonder recollection, too, hereafter."

"Do you think so, mon lieutenant?" said the poor fellow, turning round quickly, as a faint smile played about his features. "Do you think so? *Sacristi!* I have said as much to myself sometimes, when I've been alone; and then I've almost thought I could hear his kind soft voice ringing in my ears — for it is kind and soft as a woman's, when he pleases, though, *parbleu!* it can call like a trumpet at other times, ay, and tingle within your heart, till it sets your blood boiling, and makes your hands twitch. I mind well the campaign in the Valais — the words keep dinning in my ears to this hour."

"What was that, Pioche," said I, pleased to see him turn from the remembrance of his own regrets.

"It is a good while past now — I forget the year exactly — but we were marching on Italy, and it was in spring; still the ground was covered with snow; every night came on with a hail-storm, that lasted till nigh daybreak; and when we arose from the bivouac, we were so stiff and frozen we could not move. They said, at the time, something went wrong with the commissariat, but when did it ever go right, I wonder? Ammunition and provisions were always late; and though the general used to drive away a commissary every week or ten days for misconduct, the new ones that came

turned out just as bad. The petit caporal kept sending them word to Paris not to send down any more '*savants*,' but a good honest man, with common sense and active habits; but — *parbleu!* birds of that feather must have been rare just then, for we never could catch one of them. Whatever was the cause, we never were so ill off; our *shakos* were like wet paper, and took any shape; and out of ridicule we used to come upon parade with them fashioned into three-cocked hats, and pointed caps, and slouched beavers. The officers couldn't say a word, you know, all this time: it was not our fault if we were in such misery. Then, as to shoes — a few could boast of the upper leathers, but a sole, or a heel, was not to be found in a company. Our coats were actually in rags, and a pivot sentry looked, for all the world, like a flag staff, as he stood fluttering in the wind.

"We bore up, however, as well as we could for some time, grumbling occasionally over our condition, and sometimes laughing at it, when we had the heart, till at last, when we saw the new convoy arrive, and all the biscuits distributed among the young regiments and the new conscripts, we could endure it no longer, and a terrible outcry arose among the troops. We were all drawn up on parade — it was an inspection; for, *parbleu!* though we were as ragged as scarecrows, they would have us out twice a week to review us, and put us through the manœuvres. Scarcely had the general — it was Buonaparte himself — got half way down the line, when a shout ran from rank to rank — 'Bread! shoes! caps! biscuits!'

"'What do I hear?' said Buonaparte, standing up in his stirrups, and frowning at the line. 'Who are the

malcontents, that dare to cry out on parade? Let them stand out. Let me see them.'

"And at once more than half the regiment of grenadiers sprang forward, and shouted louder than before — 'Bread! bread! Let us have food and clothing! If we are to fight, let us not die of hunger!'

"'Grenadiers of the fourth,' cried he, in a terrible voice, 'to your ranks! Second division, and third!' shouted he, with his hand up, 'form in square! — carry arms! — present arms! — front rank, kneel! — kneel!' said he again, louder; for you know we never did *that* in those days. However, every word was obeyed, and down dropped the leading files on their knees, and there we were rooted to the ground. Not a man spoke — all silent as death.

"He then advanced to the front of the staff, and pointing his hand to a convoy of waggons that could just be seen turning the angle of the road, with white flags flying, to show what they were, called out — — 'Commissary-general, distribute full rations and half ammunition to the young regiments — half rations and full ammunition to the veterans of Egypt!' A shout of applause burst out, but he cried louder than before — 'Silence in the ranks!' Then taking off his chapeau, he stood bare-headed before us; and in a voice, like the bugle that blows the charge, he read from a large paper in his hand — 'In the name of the French republic — one and indivisible. The directory of the nation decrees — that the thanks of the government be given to the grenadiers of the fourth, who have deserved well of their country. *Vive la république!*'

"'Vive la république!' shouted the whole square in a roar, like the sea itself. Who thought more of hard-

ships or hunger then? Our only desire was, when we were to meet the enemy; and many a jest and many a laugh went round, as we loaded our pouches with the new ammunition.

“‘Who’s that fellow yonder?’ said Buonaparte, as he rode slowly down the line. ‘I should know him, I think. Isn’t that Pioche?’

“‘Yes, mon général,’ said I, saluting him. ‘It is what remains of poor Pioche; *parbleu!* very little more than half, though.’

“‘Ah! glutton,’ said he laughing, ‘I ought to have guessed you were here; one such gourmand is enough to corrupt a whole brigade.’

“‘Pioche is a good soldier, citizen general,’ said my captain, who was an old schoolfellow of mine.

“‘I know it, captain,’ said the general.

“‘You were in Exelmans’ dragoons, Pioche, if I mistake not?’

“‘Two years and ten months, citizen general.’

“‘Why did you leave them, and when?’

“‘At Monte Bello, with the colonel’s permission.’

“‘And the reason?’

“‘*Morbleu!* it was a fancy I had. They killed two horses under me that day, and I saw I was not destined for the cavalry.’

“‘Ha! ha!’ said he, with a sly laugh; ‘had they been asses, the thing might have been different — eh?’

“‘Yes, mon général,’ said I, growing red, for I knew what he meant.

“‘Come, Pioche, you must go back again to your old corps; they want one or two like you, — though, *parbleu!* you’ll ruin the republic in remounts.’

“‘As you please it, general.’

“ ‘Well, what shall I do for you besides? Any more commissaries to row — eh? Methinks no bad time to gratify you in that way.’

“ ‘Ah, mon général, if you would only hang up one, now and then.’

“ ‘So I intend, the next time I hear of any of my soldiers being obliged to eat the asses of the vivandières,’ and with that he rode on laughing, though none, save myself, knew what he alluded to, and *ma foi!* I was not disposed to turn the laugh against myself by telling; but there goes the réveille, and I must leave you, mon lieutenant, the gates will be open in a few minutes.”

“Good-bye, Pioche,” said I, “and many thanks for your pleasant company, I hope we shall meet again and soon.”

“I hope so, mon lieutenant; and if it be at a bivouac fire, all the better.”

The gallant corporal made his military salute, wheeled about, stiff as if on parade, and departed; while I, throwing my cloak over my arm, turned into the broad alley and left the garden.

CHAPTER XI.

A story of the — '92.

I FOUND every thing in the Rue de Rohan as I had left it the day before. General D'Auvergne had not been there during my absence, but a messenger from Versailles brought intelligence that the court would arrive that evening in Paris, and in all likelihood the general would accompany them.

My day was then at my own disposal, and having dressed, I strolled out to enjoy all the strange and novel sights of the great capital. They who can carry

their memories back to Paris at that period, may remember the prodigious amount of luxury and wealth so prodigally exhibited — the equipages, the liveries, the taste in dress, were all of the most costly character — the very shops, too, vied with each other in the splendour and richness of their display, and court uniforms and ornaments of jewellery glittered in every window. Hussar jackets in all their bravery — chapeaus covered with feather trimming and looped with diamonds — sabres with ivory scabbards encrusted with topaz and turquoise, replaced the simple costumes of the revolutionary era, as rapidly as did the high-sounding titles of “excellence” and “monseigneur,” the unpretending designation of “citoyen.” Still the military feature of the land was in the ascendant: in the phrase of the day, it was the “moustache” that governed. Not a street had not its group of officers, on horseback or on foot — regiments passed on duty, or arrived from the march at every turn of the way. The very rabble kept time and step as they followed, and the warlike spirit animated every class of the population. All these things ministered to my enthusiasm, and set my heart beating the stronger for the time, when the career of arms was to open before me. This, if I were to judge from all I saw, could not now be far distant. The country for miles around Paris was covered with marching men, their faces all turned eastward — orderlies, booted and splashed, trotted rapidly from street to street, and general officers, with their aid-de-camps, rode up and down with a haste that boded preparation.

My mind was too full of its own absorbing interests to make me care to visit the theatre, and having dined in a café on the Boulevard, I turned towards the general's

quarters, in the hope of finding him arrived. As I entered the Rue de Rohan, I was surprised at a crowd collected about the door, watching the details of packing a travelling carriage which stood before it. A heavy fourgon loaded with military chests and boxes, seemed also to attract their attention, and call forth many a surmise as to its destination.

"Le petit caporal has something in his head, depend upon it," said a thin dark-whiskered fellow with a wooden leg, and whose air and gesture bespoke the old soldier — "the staff never move off, extra post, without a good reason for it."

"It is the English are about to catch it this time," said a miserable-looking decrepit creature, who was occupied in roasting chestnuts over an open stove. "Hot, all hot, Messieurs and Mesdames, real 'marrons de Nancy' — the true and only veritable chestnuts with a truffle flavour. — *Sacristi!* now the sea-wolves will meet their match. It is such brave fellows as you, monsieur le grenadier, can make them tremble."

The old pensioner smoothed down his moustache and made no reply.

"The English indeed," said a fat, ruddy-faced woman, with a slight line of dark beard on her upper lip: "my husband's a pioneer in the twenty-second, and says they're nothing better than poltroons — how we made them run at Arcola — wasn't it Arcola?" said she, as a buzz of laughter ran through the crowd.

"Tonnerre de guerre," cried the little man, "if I was at them." A loud burst of merriment met this warlike speech, while the maimed soldier, apparently pleased with the creature's courage, smiled blandly on him as he said — "Let me have two sous worth of your chestnuts."

Leaving the party to their discussion, I now entered the house, and edging my way up stairs between trunks and packing-cases, arrived at the drawing-room. The general had just come in; he had been the whole morning at court, and was eating a hurried dinner in order to return to the Tuilleries for the evening reception. Although his manner towards me was kind and cordial in the extreme, I thought he looked agitated and even depressed, and seemed much older and more broken than before.

"You see, Burke, you'll have little time to enjoy Paris gaieties — we leave to-morrow."

"Indeed, Sir; so soon."

"Yes, Lasalle is off already; Dorsenne starts in two hours; and we three, rendezvous at Coblenz. I wished much to see you," continued he, after a minute's pause; "but I could not get away from Versailles even for a day. Tell me, have you got a letter I wrote to you when at Mayence. I mean, is it still in existence?"

"Yes, Sir," said I, somewhat astonished at the question.

"I wrote it hurriedly," added he, with something of confusion in his manner — "do let me see it."

I unlocked my writing desk at once and handed him his own letter. He opened it hastily, and having thrown his eyes speedily across it, said, and in a voice far more at ease than before —

"That will do. I feared lest perhaps — but no matter. This is better than I thought."

With this he gave the letter back into my hands, and appeared for some moments engaged in deep thought; then with a voice and manner which showed a different channel was given to his thoughts, he said —

"The game has opened — the Austrians have invaded Bavaria. The whole disposable force of France is on the march — a hurried movement — but so it is — Napoleon always strikes, like his own emblem, the eagle."

"True, Sir; but even that serves to heighten the chivalrous feeling of the soldier, when the sword springs from the scabbard at the call of honour, and is not drawn slowly forth at the whispered counsel of some wily diplomat."

He smiled half mournfully at the remark, or at my impetuosity in making it, as he said —

"My dear boy, never flatter yourself that the cause of any war can enter into the calculation of the soldier. The liberty he fights for, is often the rankest tyranny — the patriotism he defends, the veriest oppression. Play the game as though the stake were but your own ambition, if you would play it manfully. As for me, I buckle on the harness for the last time — come what will of it. The emperor feels, and justly feels, indignant that many of the older officers have declined the service by which alone they were elevated to rank, and wealth, and honour. It was not then at the moment when he distinguished me by an unsought promotion, still more, conferred a personal favour on me, that I could ask leave to retire from the army."

By the tone in which he said these last few words I saw that the general was now approaching the topic I felt so curious about, and did not venture by a word to interrupt or divert his thoughts from it. My calculation proved correct; for after meditating some eight or ten minutes, he drew his chair closer to mine, and in a voice of ill-repressed agitation spoke thus: —

“You doubtless know the history of our great revolution, the causes that led to, the consequences that immediately sprung from it — the terrible anarchy, the utter confiscation of wealth, and worse still, the social disorganization that invaded every family, however humble, or however exalted; setting wives against their husbands, children against their parents, and making brothers sworn enemies to each other. It was in vain for any man once engaged in the struggle, to draw back; the least hesitation to perform any order of the convention — the delay of a moment, to think, was death; some one was ever on the watch to denounce the man thus deliberating, and he was led forth to the guillotine like the blackest criminal. The immediate result of all this was a distrust that pervaded the entire nation. No one knew who to speak to, nor dared any confide in him who once had been his dearest friend. The old royalists trembled at every stir — the few demonstrations they forced themselves to make of concurrence in the new state of things, were received with suspicion and jealousy. The ‘Blues,’ for so the revolutionary party was called, thirsted for their blood; the aristocracy had been, as they deemed, long their oppressors; and where vengeance ceased, cupidity begun. They longed to seize upon the confiscated estates, and revel as masters in the halls where so oft they had waited as lacqueys. But the evil ended not here — wherever private hate, or secret malice lurked, an opportunity for revenge now offered, and for one head that fell under the supposed guilt of treason to France, a hundred dropped beneath the axe, from causes of personal animosity and long-nurtured vengeance; and thus many an idle word uttered in haste or carelessness,

some passing slight, some chance neglect, met now its retribution, and that retribution was ever death.

“It chanced that in the south, in one of those remote districts, where intelligence is always slow in arriving, and where political movements rarely disturb the quiet current of daily life, there lived one of those old seigneurs who, at that period, were deemed sovereign princes in the little locale they inhabited. The soil had been their own for centuries — long custom had made them respected and looked up to — while the acts of kindness and benevolence in which from father to son their education consisted, formed even a stronger tie to the affections of the peasantry. The church, too, contributed not a little to the maintenance of this feudalism, and the “chateau” entered into the subject of the village prayers, as naturally as though a very principle of their faith. There was something beautifully touching in the intercourse between the lord of the soil and its tillers — in the kindly interest of the one, repaid in reverence and devotion by the others: *his* foresight for their benefit — *their* attachment and fidelity; the paternal care, the filial love, made a picture of rural happiness such as no land ever equalled, such as perhaps none will ever see again. The seigneur of whom I speak, was a true type of this class — he had been, in his boyhood, a page at the gorgeous court of Louis XV., mixed in the voluptuous fascinations of the period — but early disgusted by the sensuality of the day, retired to his distant chateau, bringing with him a wife, one of the most beautiful and accomplished persons of the court, but one who, like himself, preferred the peace and tranquillity of a country life to the whirlwind pleasures of a vicious capital. For years they lived childless; but

at last, after a long lapse of time, two children were born to this union, a boy and girl, both lovely, and likely, in every respect, to bless them with happiness. Shortly after the birth of the girl, the mother became delicate, and after some months of suffering, died. The father, who never rallied from the hour of her death, and took little interest in the world, soon followed her, and the children were left orphans, when the eldest was but four years of age, and his sister but three. Before the count died he sent for his steward — you know that the steward, or intendant, in France, was formerly the person of greatest trust in any family, the faithful adviser in times of difficulty, the depository of secrets, the friend, in a word, who in humble guise offered his counsel in every domestic arrangement, and without whom no project was entertained or determined on, and usually the office was hereditary, descending from father to son for centuries.

“In this family such was the case, his father and grandfather before him had filled the office, and Leon Guichard well knew every tradition of the house, and from his infancy his mind had been stored with tales of its ancient wealth and former greatness. His father had died but a short time previous, and when the count's last illness seized him, Leon was only in the second year of his stewardship. Brief as the period was, however, it had sufficed to give abundant proof of his zeal and ability. New sources of wealth grew up under his judicious management — improvements were every where conspicuous; and while the seigneur himself found his income increased by nearly one half, the tenants had gained in equal proportion, such was the result of his activity and intelligence. These changes,

marvellous as they may seem, were then of frequent occurrence — the lands of the south had been tilled for centuries without any effort at improvement — sons were content to go on as their fathers had done before them — increased civilization, with its new train of wants and luxuries, never invaded this remote, untravelled district, and primitive tastes and simple habits succeeded each other generation after generation unaltered and unchanged. Suddenly, however, a new light broke on the world, which penetrated even the darkness of the far-off valleys of La Provence. Intelligence began to be more widely diffused — men read and reflected — the rudiments of every art and every science were put within the reach of humble comprehensions; and they who before were limited to memory or hearsay for such knowledge as they possessed, could now apply at the fountain for themselves. Leon Guichard was not slow in cultivating these new resources, and applying them to the circumstances about him; and although many an obstacle arose, dictated by stupid adherence to old customs, or fast-rooted prejudice against new-fashioned methods — by perseverance he overcame them all, and actually enriched the people in spite of themselves.

“The seigneur, himself a man of no mean intellect, saw much of this with sorrow — he felt that a mighty change was accomplishing, and that as one by one the ancient landmarks by which men had been guided for ages were removed, none could foresee what results might follow, nor where the passion for alteration might cease. The superstitions of the church, harmless in themselves, were now openly attacked; its observances, before so deeply venerated, were even assailed as idle

ceremonies, and it seemed as if the strong cable that bound men to faith and loyalty had parted, and that their minds were drifting over a broad and pathless sea. Such was the ominous opening of the revolution, such the terrible ground swell before the storm.

“On his death-bed, then, he entreated Leon to be aware that evil days were approaching — that the time was not distant when men should rely upon the affection and love of those around them, on the ties that attached them to each other for years long, on the mutual interests that had grown up from their cradles — he besought him to turn the people’s minds, as far as might be, from the specious theories that were afloat, and fix them on their once-loved traditions — and, above all, he charged him, as the guardian of his orphan children, to keep *them* aloof from the contamination of dangerous doctrines, and to train them up in the ancient virtues of their house, in charity and benevolence.

“Scarce had the old count’s grave closed over him, when men began to perceive a marked change in Leon Guichard; no longer humble even to subserviousness as before, he now assumed an air of pride and haughtiness that soon estranged his companions from him. As guardian to the orphan children, he resided in the chateau, and took on him the pretensions of the master. Its stately equipage, with great emblazoned panels, the village wonder at every fête-day, was now replaced by a more modern vehicle, newly arrived from Paris, in which Monsieur Guichard daily took his airings. The old servants, many of them born in the chateau, were sent adrift, and a new and very different class succeeded them; all was changed, even the little path that led up from the presbytère to the chateau, and along which the

old curé was seen wending his way on each Sunday to his dinner with the seigneur, was now closed — the gate walled up — while the Sabbath itself was only dedicated to greater festivities and excess, to the scandal of the villagers.

“Meanwhile, the children grew up in strength and beauty; like wild flowers, they had no nurture, but they flourished in all this neglect, ignorant and unconscious of the scenes around them. They roved about the live-long day through the meadows, or that wilderness of a garden, on which no longer any care was bestowed, and where rank luxuriance gave a beauty of its own to the rich vegetation. With the unsuspecting freshness of their youth, they enjoyed the present, without a thought of the future — they loved each other, and were happy. To them the vague reports and swelling waves of the revolution, which each day gained ground, brought neither fear nor apprehension; they little dreamed that the violence of political strife could ever reach their quiet valleys; nor did they think the hour was near when the tramp of soldiery, and the ruffian shout of predatory war were to replace the song of the vigneron, and the dance of the villager. The revolution came at last, sweeping like a torrent over the land — it blasted as it went — beneath its baneful breath every thing withered and wasted — loyalty, religion, affection, and brotherly love — all died out in the devoted country — anarchy and bloodshed were masters of the scene. The first dreadful act of this fearful drama passed like a dream to those, who, at a distance from Paris, only read of the atrocities of that wretched capital; but when the wave rolled nearer, when crowds of armed men, wild and savage in look, with ragged uniforms and blood-

stained hands, prowled about the villages, where in happier times a soldier had never been seen — when the mob around the guillotine supplied the place of the gathering at the market — when the pavement was wet and slippery with human blood — men's natures suddenly became changed, as though some terrible curse from on high had fallen on them — their minds caught up the fearful contagion of revolt, and a mad impulse to deny all they had once held sacred and venerable, seized on all. Their blasphemies against religion went hand in hand with their desecration of every thing holy in social life, and a pre-eminence in guilt became the highest object of ambition. Sated with slaughter, bloated with crime, the nation reeled like a drunken savage over the ruin it created, and with the insane lust of blood, poured forth its armed thousands throughout the whole of Europe. Then began the much-boasted triumphs of the revolutionary armies — the lauded victories of those great assertors of liberty — say, rather, the carnage of famished wolves — the devastating rage of blood-thirsty maniacs. The conscription seized on the whole youth of France, as if fearful that in the untarnished minds of the young the seeds of better things might bear fruit in season. They carried them away to scenes of violence and rapine, where, amid the shouts of battle and the cries of the dying, no voice of human sympathy might touch their hearts, no trembling of remorse should stir within them.

“‘You are named in the conscription, Monsieur,’ said Leon, in a short, abrupt tone, as one morning he entered the dressing-room of his young master.

“‘Me! I named in the conscription!’ replied the other, with a look of incredulity and anger. ‘This is

but a sorry jest, Master Leon, and not in too good taste, either.'

"'Good or bad,' answered the steward, 'the fact is as I say, here is the order from the *municipal*; you were fifteen, yesterday, you know.'

"'True; and what then; am I not Marquis de Neufchatel, Count de Rochefort, in right of my mother?'

"'There are no more marquises, no more counts,' said the other roughly; 'France has had enough of such cattle; the less you allude to them the safer for your head.'

"He spoke truly, the reign of the aristocracy was ended; and while they were yet speaking, an emissary of the convention, accompanied by a party of troops, arrived at the chateau to fetch away the newly-drawn conscript.

"I must not dwell on the scene which followed. The heart-rending sorrow of those who had lived but for each other, now torn asunder for the first time, not knowing when, if ever, they were to meet again. His sister wished to follow him, but even had he permitted it, such would have been impossible. The dreadful career of the revolutionary soldier was an obstacle insurmountable. The same evening the battalion of infantry to which he was attached began their march towards Savoy, and the lovely orphan of the chateau fell dangerously ill.

"Youth, however, triumphed over her malady, which indeed was brought on by grief; and after some weeks, she was again restored to health. During the interval, nothing could be more kind and attentive than Leon

Guichard; his manner, of late years rough and uncivil, became softened and tender; the hundred little attentions which illness seeks for, he paid with zeal and watchfulness; every thing which could alleviate her sorrow or calm her afflicted mind, was resorted to, with a kind of instinctive delicacy, and she began to feel that in her long-cherished dislike of the intendant, she had done him grievous wrong.

“This change of manner attracted the attention of many besides the inhabitants of the chateau. They remarked his altered looks and bearing, the more studied attention to his dress and appearance, and the singular difference in all his habits of life; no longer did he pass his time in the wild orgies of debauchery and excess, but in careful management of the estate, and rarely or never left the chateau after nightfall.

“A hundred different interpretations were given to this line of acting: some said that the more settled condition of political affairs had made him cautious and careful, for it was now the reign of the Directory, and the old excesses of the '92 were no longer endured; others, that he was naturally of a kind and benevolent nature, and that his savage manner and reckless conduct were assumed merely in compliance with the horrible features of the time. None, however, suspected the real cause. Leon Guichard was in love! Yes, the humble steward, the coarse follower of the vices of that detestable period was captivated by the beauty of the young girl, now springing into womanhood. The freshness of her artless nature, her guileless innocence, her soft voice, her character so balanced between gaiety and thoughtfulness, her loveliness, so unlike all he had ever seen before, had seized upon his whole heart; and,

as the sun darting from behind the blackest clouds will light up the surface of a bleak landscape, touching every barren rock and tipping every bell of purple heath with colour and richness, so over his rugged nature the beauty of this fair girl shed a very halo of light, and a spirit awoke within him to seek for better things, to endeavour better things, to fly the coarse depraved habits of his former self, to conform to the tastes of her he worshipped. Day by day his stern nature became more softened. No longer those terrible bursts of passion, to which he once gave way, escaped him; his voice, his very look, too, was changed in its expression, and a gentleness of manner almost amounting to timidity, now characterised him who had once been the type of the most savage Jacobin.

“She to whom this wondrous change was owing knew nothing of the miracle she had worked; she would not, indeed, have believed, had any one told her. She scarcely remarked him when they met, and did not perceive that he was no longer like his former self; her whole soul wrapped up in her dear brother’s fate, she lived from week to week in the thought of his letters home. It is true her life had many enjoyments which owed their source to the intendant’s care; but she knew not of this, and felt more grateful to him when he came letter in hand from the little post of the village, than when the fair moss roses of spring filled the vases of the *salon*, or the earliest fruits of summer decked her table. At times, something in his demeanour would strike her — a tinge of sorrow it seemed rather than aught else; but as she attributed this, as every other grief, to her brother’s absence, she paid no further attention to it, and merely thought good Leon had more feeling than they used to give him credit for.

“At last, the campaign of Arcola over, the young soldier obtained a short leave to see his sister. How altered were they both: she from the child had become the beautiful girl; her eyes flashing with the brilliant sparkle of youth, her step elastic, her colour changing with every passing expression. He was already a man, bronzed and sunburnt; his dark eyes darker, and his voice deeper, but still his former self in all the warmth of his affection to his sister.

“The lieutenant, for so was he always called by the old soldier who accompanied him as his servant, and oftentimes by the rest of the household, had seen much of the world in the few years of his absence.

“The chances and changes of a camp had taught him many things which lie far beyond its own limits, and he had learned to scan men’s minds and motives, with a quick eye and ready wit. He was not long therefore in observing the alteration in Leon Guichard’s manner, nor was he slow in tracing it to its real cause. At first, the sudden impulse of his passion would have driven him to any length; the presumption of such a thought was too great to endure — but then the times he lived in taught him some strong lessons; he remembered the scenes of social disorder and anarchy of his childhood; how every rank became subverted, and how men’s minds were left to their own unbridled influences to choose their own position, and he bethought him, that in such trials as these, Leon had conducted himself with moderation; that to his skilful management it was owing, if the property had not suffered confiscation like so many others, and that it was perhaps hard to condemn a man for being struck by charms, which, however above him in the scale of rank, were

still continually before his eyes. Reasoning thus, he determined as the wisest course, to remove his sister to the house of a relative, where she could remain during his absence. This would at once put a stop to the steward's folly — for so he could not help deeming it — and what was of equal consequence in the young soldier's eyes — prevent his sister being offended by ever suspecting the existence of such a feeling towards her. The plan once resolved on, met no difficulty from his sister; his promise to return soon to see her was enough to compensate for any arrangement, and it was determined that they should set out towards the south by the first week in September.

“When the intimation of this change first reached Leon, which it did from the other servants, he could not believe it, and resolved to hasten to the lieutenant himself, and ask if it were true. On that day, however, the young soldier was absent shooting, and was not to return before night. Tortured with doubt and fear, trembling at the very thought of her departure — whose presence had been the load-star of his life — he rushed from the house and hurried into the wood. Every spot reminded him of her, and he shuddered to think that in a few hours his existence would have lost its spring. That ere the week was past, he would be alone without the sight of her, whom, even to have seen, constituted the happiness of the whole day. Revolving such sad thoughts, he strolled on, not knowing whither, and at last, on turning the angle of a path, found himself before the object of his musings; she was returning from a farewell visit to one of the cottagers, and was hastening to the chateau to dress for dinner.

“‘Ah! Monsieur Leon,’ said she, suddenly, ‘I am glad to meet you here — these poor people at the wooden bridge will miss me, I fear; you must look to them in my absence — and, there is old Jeanette — she fancies she can spin still — I pray you let her have her little pension regularly. The children at Calotte, too, they are too far from the school — mind that they have their books.’

“‘And are you indeed going from hence, Mademoiselle?’ said he, in a tone and accent so unlike his ordinary one, as to make her start with surprise.

“‘Yes, to be sure. We leave the day after to-morrow.’

“‘And have you no regret, Mademoiselle, to leave the home of your childhood and those you have — known there?’

“‘Sir!’ replied she haughtily, as the tone of his voice assumed a meaning which could not be mistaken, ‘you seem to have forgotten yourself somewhat, or you had not dared —’

“‘Dared!’ interrupted he, in a louder key — ‘dared — I have dared more than that. Yes,’ cried he in a voice where passion could be no longer held under — ‘Leon Guichard, the steward, has dared to love his master’s daughter. Start not so proudly back, Madame. Time was when such an avowal had been a presumption death could not repay, but these days are past. The haughty have been well humbled; they who deemed their blood a stream too pure to mingle with the current in plebeian veins, have poured it lavishly beneath the guillotine. Leon Guichard has no master now!’

“The fire flashed from his eyes as he spoke, and his colour, pale at first, grew darker and darker, till

his face became almost purple, while his nostrils, swelled to twice their natural size, dilated and contracted like those of a fiery charger. Terrified at the frightful paroxysm of passion before her, the timid girl endeavoured to allay his anger, and replied —

“‘You know well, Leon, that my brother has ever treated you as a friend —’

“‘He — a friend!’ cried he, stamping on the ground, while a look of demoniac malice lit up his features. — ‘He, who talks to me as though I were a vassal, a slave; he, who deems his merest word of approval a recompense for all my labour, all my toil; he, whose very glance shoots into my heart like a dagger. Think you, I forgive him the contemptuous treatment of nineteen years, or that I can pardon insults because they have grown into habits. Hear me,’ he grasped her wrist rigidly as he spoke, and continued, ‘I have sworn an oath to be revenged on him from the hour when a boy, scarce eight years old, he struck me on the face and called me *canaille*. I vowed his ruin. I toiled for it, I strove for it, and I succeeded — ay, succeeded. I obtained from the Convention the confiscation of your lands — all — every thing you possessed. I held the titles in my possession, for I was the owner of this broad chateau — ay — Leon Guichard — even so. You were but my guest here. I kept it by me many a day, and when your brother was drawn in the conscription, I resolved to assert my right before the world.’ He paused for a moment, while a tremendous convulsion shook his frame, and made him tremble like one in an ague; then suddenly rallying, he passed his hand across his brow, and in a lower voice resumed — ‘I would have done so but for you.’

“‘For me! — what mean you?’ said she, almost sinking with terror.

“‘I loved you — loved you as only he can love who can surrender all his cherished hopes — his dream of ambition — his vengeance even, to his love. I thought too that you were not cold to my advances; and fearing lest any hazard should apprise you of my success, and thus run counter to my wishes, I lived on here as your servant, still hoping for the hour when I might call you mine, and avow myself the lord of this chateau. How long I might have continued thus I know not. To see you, to look on you, to live beneath the same roof with you, seemed happiness enough, but when I heard that you were to leave this, to go away, never to return perhaps, or if so, not as her I loved and worshipped, then —. But why look you thus? Is it because you doubt these things? Look here — see this. Is that in form? Are these signatures authentic? Is that the seal of the National Convention? What say you now? It is not the steward Leon that sues, but the Citizen Guichard — *propriétaire de Rochefort*. Now methinks that makes some difference in the proposition.’

“‘None, Sir,’ replied she, with a voice whose steady utterance made each word sink into his heart; ‘save as it adds to my contempt for him who has dared to seek my affection in the ruin of my family. I did but despise you before. —’

“‘Beware,’ said he, in a voice of menace, but in which no violence of passion entered, ‘you are in my power. I ask you again, will you consent to be my wife? Will you save your brother from the scaffold, and yourself from beggary and ruin — I can accomplish both.’

“A look of ineffable scorn was all her reply; when he sprang forward and threw his arm round her waist—

““Or would you drive me to the worst—”

“A terrific shriek broke from her as she felt his hand around her, when the brushwood crashed behind her, and her brother's dogs sprang from the thicket. With a loud cry she called upon his name; he answered from the wood, and dashed towards her just as she sank fainting to the ground. — Leon was gone.

“As soon as returning strength permitted, she told her brother the fearful story of the steward; but bound him by every entreaty not to come himself in contact with a monster so depraved. When they reached the chateau, they learned that Guichard had been there and left it again; and from that hour they saw him no more.

“I must now conclude in a few words, and to do so, may mention, that in the year '99, I became the purchaser of Haute Rochefort, at a sale of forfeited estates, it having been bought by government on some previous occasion, but from whom, and how, I never learned. The story I have told I learned from the notaire of Hubane, the village in the neighbourhood, who was conversant with all its details, and knew well the several actors in it, as well as their future fortunes.

“The brother became a distinguished officer, and rose to some rank in the service, but embarking in the expedition to Ireland, was reported to Buonaparte as having betrayed the French cause. The result was, he was struck off the list of the army, and pronounced degraded; he died in some unknown place.

“The sister became attached to her cousin, but the brother opposing the union, she was taken away to Paris; the lover returned to Bretagne, where having

heard a false report of her marriage at court, he assumed holy orders, and being subsequently charged, but it is now believed falsely, of corresponding with the Bourbons, was shot in his own garden by a platoon of infantry. But how is this; are you ill; has my story so affected you?"

"That brother was my friend — my dearest, my only friend — Charles de Meudon."

"What! and did you know poor Charles?"

But I could not speak; the tears ran fast down my cheeks, as I thought of all his sorrows — sorrows far greater than ever he had told me.

"Poor Marie," said the general, as he wiped a tear from his eye; "few have met such an enemy as she did: every misfortune of her life has sprung from one hand; her brother — her lover's death, were both his acts."

"Leon Guichard! And who is he? or how could he have done these things?"

"Methinks you might yourself reply to your own question."

"I! how could that be? I know him not."

"Yes, but you do: Leon Guichard is Mehée de La Touche!"

Had a thunderbolt fallen between us, I could not have felt more terror. That name spoken but twice or thrice in my hearing, had each time brought its omen of evil. It was the same with whose acquaintance Marie de Meudon charged me in the garden at Versailles, the same who brought the Chouans to the guillotine, and had so nearly involved myself in their ruin; and now I heard of him as one whose dreadful life had been a course of perfidy and crime, one who blasted all around him, and scattered ruin as he went.

“I have little more to add,” resumed the general, after a long pause, and in a voice whose weakened accents evinced how fearfully the remembrance he called up, affected him. “What remains, too, more immediately concerns myself than others. I am the last of my house — an ancient family, and one not undistinguished in the annals of France, hangs but on the feeble thread of a withered and broken old man’s life, with whom it dies; my only brother fell in the Austrian campaign. — I never had a sister; uncles and cousins I have had in numbers, but death and exile have been rife these last twenty years, and save myself, none bears the name of D’Auvergne. Yet once I nourished the hope of a family — of a race who should hand down the ancient virtues of our house to after years. I thought of those gallant ancestors whose portraits graced the walls of the old chateau I was born in, and fancied myself leading my infant boy from picture to picture, as I pointed out the brave and the good, who had been his forefathers. But this is a dream long since dispelled. I was then a youth, scarce older than yourself, rich, and with every prospect of happiness before me; I fell in love, and the object of my passion seemed one created to have made the very paradise I sought for. She was beautiful, beyond even the loveliest of a handsome court; highborn and gifted; but her heart was bestowed on another, — one who unlike myself, encouraged no daring thoughts, no ambitious longings, but who, wholly devoted to her he loved, sought in tranquil quiet the happiness such spirits can give each other. She told me herself, frankly, as I speak now to you, that she could not be mine, and then placed

my hand in her husband's. This was Marie de Rochefort, the mother of Mademoiselle de Meudon.

"The world's changes seem ever to bring about these strange vicissitudes by which our early deeds of good and evil are brought more forcibly to our memories, and we are made to think over the past by some accident of the present. After twenty years I came to live in that chateau where she, whom I once loved, had lived and died. I became the lord of that estate which her husband once possessed, and where in happiness they had dwelt together. I will not dwell upon the thoughts such associations ever give rise to; I dare not, old as I am, evoke them." He paused for some minutes, and then went on—"Two years ago I learned that Mademoiselle de Meudon was the daughter of my once loved Marie; from that hour I felt no longer childless; I watched over her, without however attracting notice on her part, and followed her everywhere; the very day I saw you first at the Polytechnique I was beside her. From all I could learn and hear, her life had been one of devoted attachment to her brother, and then to Madame Buonaparte; her heart, it was said, was buried with him she once loved, at least none since had ever won even the slightest acknowledgment from her, bordering on encouragement.

"Satisfied that she was every thing I could have wished my own daughter, and feeling that with youth the springs of affection rarely dry up, I conceived the idea of settling all my property on her, and entreating the emperor to make me her guardian, with her own consent of course. He agreed; he went further; he repealed, so far as it concerned her, the law by which the daughters of royalists cannot inherit, and made her

eligible to succeed to property, and placed her hand at my disposal.

"Such was the state of matters when I wrote to you; since that I have seen her, and spoken to her in confidence; she has consented to every portion of the arrangement, save that which involves her marrying; but some strange superstition being over her mind that her fate is to ruin all with whom it is linked, that her name carries an evil destiny with it, she refuses every offer of marriage, and will not yield to my solicitation.

"I thought," said the general, as he leaned on his hand, and muttered half aloud, "that I had conceived a plan which must bring happiness with it; but, however, one part of my design is accomplished, she is my heir—the daughter of my own loved Marie is the child of my adoption, and for this I have reason to feel grateful. The cheerless feeling of a death-bed, where not one mourns for the dying, haunts me no longer, and I feel not as one deserted and alone. To-morrow I go to wish her adieu; we are to be at the Tuilleries by noon. The emperor holds a levee, and our final orders will then be given."

The old general rallied at the last few words he spoke, and pressing my hand affectionately, wished me good night, and withdrew. While I, with a mind confused and stunned, sat thinking over the melancholy story he had related, and sorrowing over the misfortunes of one, whose lot in life had been far sadder than my own.

CHAPTER XII.

The hall of the marshals.

SOME minutes before noon we entered the Place de Carousel, now thronged with equipages and led horses. Officers, in the rich uniforms of every arm of the service, were pressing their way to the palace, amid the crash of carriages, the buzz of recognitions, and the thundering sounds of the brass band, whose echo was redoubled beneath the vaulted vestibule of the palace.

Borne along with the torrent, we mounted the wide stair and passed from room to room, until we arrived at the great antechamber where the officers of the household were assembled in their splendid dresses. Here the crowd was so dense, we were unable to move on for some time, and it was after nearly an hour's waiting, that we at last found ourselves within that gorgeous gallery, named by the emperor, "La salle des Maréchaux." At any other moment my attention had been rivetted upon the magnificence and beauty of this great *salon*, its pictures, its gildings, the richness of the hangings, the tasteful elegance of the ceiling, with its tracery of dull gold, the great works of art in bronze and marble that adorned it on every side; but now my mind took another and very different range. Here around me were met the greatest generals and warriors of Europe. The names, second alone to his, who had no equal. There stood Ney, with his broad, retiring forehead, and his eyes black and flashing, like an eagle's. With what energy he spoke, how full of passionate vigour that thick and rapid utterance, that left a tremulous quavering on his lip even when he ceased to speak. What a contrast to the bronzed unmoved features of the large

man he addressed, and who listened to him with such deference of manner; his yellow moustache bespeaks not the Frenchman, he is a German, by blood at least, for it is Kellermann, the colonel of the cuirassiers of the guard. And yonder was Soult, with his strong features seamed by many a day of hardship, the centre of a group of colonels of the staff, to whom he was rapidly communicating their orders. Close beside him stood Lannes, his arm in a sling; a gun-shot wound that defied the art of his surgeons, still deprived him of his left hand. And there leaned Savary against the window, his dark eyes rivetted on the corps of gendarmerie in the court beneath. Full taller by a head than the largest about him, he seemed almost gigantic in the massive accoutrements of his service. The fierce Davoust, the gay and splendid Murat, with his waving plumes and jewelled dolman. Lefebvre, the very type of his class, moving with difficulty from a wound in his hip — all were there — while passing rapidly from place to place, I remarked a young and handsome man, whose uniform of colonel bore the decoration of the legion — he appeared to know and be known to all — this was Eugene Beauharnais, the stepson of the emperor “Ah, General D’Auvergne,” cried he, approaching with a smile, “his majesty desires to see you after the levee — you leave to-night, I believe.”

“Yes, colonel, all is in readiness,” said the general, while I thought a look of anxiety at the emperor’s summons seemed to agitate his features.

“One of your staff,” said Beauharnais, bowing, as he looked towards me.

“My aid-de-camp, Lieutenant Burke,” replied the general, presenting me.

“Ah, I remember,” said the colonel, as he drew himself proudly up, and seemed as though the recollection were any thing but favourable to me. But just then the wide folding doors were thrown open, and a loud voice proclaimed “sa Majesté L’Empereur.” In an instant every voice was hushed, the groups broke up, and the persons fell back into two long lines, between which lay a passage, along this the officers of the palace retired slowly, facing the emperor, who came step by step after them. I could but see the pale face, massive and regular, like the head of an antique cameo; the hair straight combed upon his fine forehead, and his large full eyes, as they turned hither and thither among that crowd, once his equals, now how immeasurably his inferiors. He stopped every now and then to say a word or two to some one as he passed, but in so low a tone, that even in the dead silence around, nothing was audible save a murmur. It was a relief to my own excited feelings, as with high beating heart, I gazed on the greatest monarch of the world — that I beheld the others around, the oldest generals, the time-worn companions of his battles, not less moved than myself.

While the emperor passed slowly along, I could mark that Eugene Beauharnais moved rapidly through the gallery, whispering now to this one, now to that, among the officers of superior grade, who, immediately after, left the *salon* by a door at the end. At length he approached General D’Auvergne, saying, “The audience of the marshals will not occupy more than half an hour, pray be in readiness to wait on his majesty when he calls; you can remain in the blue drawing-room next the gallery.”

The general bowed, and taking my arm moved

slowly from the spot in the direction mentioned, and in a few minutes we found ourselves in the small room where the empress used to receive her morning visitors during the consulate.

"You remember this *salon*, Burke?" said the general, carelessly.

"Yes, Sir, but too well — it was here that his majesty gave me that rebuke —"

"True, true, my dear boy, I forgot that completely — but come, there has been time enough to forget it since. I wonder what can mean this summons to attend here — I have received my orders — there has been, so far as I understand, no change of plan. Well, well, we shall soon know — see, the levee has begun to break up already — there goes the staff of the artillery — that roll of the drum is for some general of division."

And now the crash of carriages, and the sounds of cavalry escorts, jingling beside them, mingled with the deep beating of the drums, made a mass of noises that filled the air, and continued without interruption for above an hour.

"*Sacristi!*" cried the general, "the crowd seems to pour in as fast as it goes out; this may last for the entire day; I have scarce two hours left me now."

He walked the room impatiently, now muttering some broken words to himself, now stopping to listen to the sounds without. Still the din continued, and the distant roll of equipages, growing louder as they came, told that the tide was yet pressing onwards towards the palace. "Three o'clock," cried the general, as the bell of the pavilion sounded; "at four I was to leave; such were my written orders, signed by the minister."

His impatience now became extreme: he knew how difficult it was in a matter of military discipline to satisfy Napoleon that any breach, even when caused by his direct orders, was not a fault. Besides, his old habits had taught him to respect a command from the minister-at-war, as something above all others.

"Beauharnais must have mistaken," said he angrily. "His majesty gave me my final directions; I'll wait no longer."

Yet did he hesitate to leave, and seemed actually to rely on me for some hint for his guidance. I did not dare to offer a suggestion, and while thus we both stood uncertain, the door opened, and a huissier called out —

"Lieut.-General D'Auvergne — this way, Sir," said the official, as he threw open a folding door into a long gallery that looked into the garden. They passed out together, and I was alone.

The agitation of the general at this unexpected summons, had communicated itself to me, but in a far different way, for I imagined that his majesty desired only to confer some mark of favour on the gallant old general before parting with him. Yet did I not venture to suggest this to him, for fear I should be mistaken.

While I revolved these doubts in my mind, the door was flung open with a crash, and a page, in the uniform of the court rushed in. "May I ask, Sir," cried he, breathless, "can you inform me where is the aid-de-camp of the General D'Auvergne. I forget the name unfortunately."

"I am the person — Lieutenant Burke."

"The same, that is the name — come after me with all haste, this way;" and so saying, he rushed down

a flight of stone stairs, clearing six or seven at a spring.

"A hurried business this, lieutenant," said the page, laughingly. "Took them all by surprise — I fancy."

"What is it? What do you mean?" asked I, eagerly.

"Hush!" said he, placing his finger on his lips; "here they come."

We had just time to stand to one side of the gallery, as the officers of the household came up, two and two, followed by the Chancellor of France, and the Dean of St. Roch, in his full canonicals. They approached the table, on which several papers and documents were lying, and proceeded to sign their names to different writings before them. While I looked on, puzzled and amazed, totally unable to make the most vague conjecture of the nature of the proceedings, I perceived that General D'Auvergne had entered the room, and was standing among the rest at the table.

"Whose signature did you propose here, general?" said the chancellor, as he took up a paper before him.

"My aid-de-camp, Lieutenant Burke."

"He is here, Sir," said the page, stepping forward.

"You are to sign your name here, Sir, and again on this side," said the chancellor, "with your birth-place annexed, age, and rank in the service."

"I am a foreigner," said I; "does that make any difference here?"

"None," said he, smiling; "the witness is but a very subordinate personage here."

I took the pen, and proceeded to write as I was desired; and while thus engaged, the door opened, and a short heavy step crossed the room. I did not dare

to look up; some secret feeling of terror ran through me, and told me it was the emperor himself.

"Well, D'Auvergne," said he, in a frank bold way, quite different from his ordinary voice, "you seem but half content with this plan of mine. *Pardieu!* there's many a brave fellow would not deem the case so hard a one."

"As your wish, Sire —."

"As mine, *diantre!* my friend; do not say mine only; you forget that the lady expressed herself equally satisfied. Come! is the *acte* completed?"

"It wants but your majesty's signature," said the chancellor.

The emperor took the pen, and dashed some indescribable scroll across the paper; then turning suddenly towards the general, he conversed with him eagerly for several minutes, but in so low a voice as not to be audible where I stood. I could but catch the words — "Darmstadt — Augsburg — the fourth corps," from which it seemed the movements of the army were the subject; when he added in a louder voice —

"Every hour now is worth a day, ay, a week, hereafter — remember that, D'Auvergne."

"Every thing is finished, Sire," said the chancellor, handing the folded papers to the emperor.

"These are for your keeping, general," said he, delivering them into D'Auvergne's hand.

"Pardon, Sire," said the chancellor, hastily. "I have made a great error here. Madame la Comtesse has not appended her signature to the consent."

"Indeed!" said the emperor, smiling. "We have been too hasty, it would seem; so thinks our reverend

father of Saint Roch, I perceive, who is evidently not accustomed to officiate '*au coup de tambour.*'"

"Her majesty the empress!" said the huissier, as he opened the doors, to permit her to enter. She was dressed in full court-dress, covered with jewels. She held within her arm the hand of another, over whose figure a deep veil was thrown, that entirely concealed her from head to foot.

"Madame la Comtesse will have the kindness to sign this," said the chancellor, as he handed over a pen to the lady. She threw back her veil as he spoke. As she turned towards the table, I saw the pale, almost deathlike features of Marie de Meudon. Such was the shock, I scarce restrained a cry from bursting forth, and a film fell before my eyes as I looked, and the figures before me floated like masses of vapour before my sight.

The empress now spoke to the general, but no longer could I take notice of what was said. Voices there were, but they conveyed nothing to my mind. A terrible rush of thoughts, too quick for perception, chased each other through my brain, and I felt as though my temples were bursting open from some pressure within. Suddenly the general moved forward, and knelt to kiss the empress' hand; he then took that of Mademoiselle de Meudon, and pressed it to his lips. I heard the word "Adieu!" faintly uttered by her low voice; the veil fell once more over her features: that moment a stir followed, and in a few minutes more we were descending the stairs alone, the general leaning on my arm — his right hand pressed across his eyes. When we reached the court, several officers of rank pressed forward, and I could hear the buzz of phrases, implying

congratulations and joy, to which the old general replied briefly, and with evident depression of manner. The dreadful oppression of a sad dream was over me still, and I felt as though to awake were impossible, when to some remark near him, the general replied —

“True! quite true, Monseigneur; I have made her my wife. There only remains one reparation for it, which is to make her my widow.”

“His wife!” said I, aloud, re-echoing the word without knowing.

“Even so, *mon ami*,” said he, pressing my hand softly. “My name and my fortune are both hers. As for myself — we shall never meet again.” He turned away his head as he spoke, nor uttered another word during the remainder of the way.

When we arrived at the Rue de Rohan, the horses were harnessed to the carriage, and all in readiness for our departure. The rumour of expected war had brought a crowd of idlers about the door, through which we passed with some difficulty into the house. Hastily throwing an eye over the now dismantled room, the old general approached the window that looked out on the Tuilleries. “Adieu!” muttered he to himself. “*Je ne vous reverrai jamais!*” And with that he pressed his travelling-cap over his brows, and descended the stairs.

A cheer burst from the mob — the postillion’s whip cracked loudly — the horses dashed over the pavement — and ere the first flurry of mad excitement had subsided from my mind, Paris was some miles behind us, and we were hastening on towards the frontier.

Almost every man has experienced at least one period in his life, when the curtain seems to drop, and

the drama in which he has hitherto acted to end; when a total change appears to pass over the interests he has lived among, and a new and very different kind of existence to open before him. Such is the case when the death of friends has left us lone and companionless; when they, into whose ears we poured our whole thoughts of sorrow or of joy, are gone, and we look around upon the bleak world, without a tie to existence, without one hope to cheer us. How naturally then do we turn from every path and place, once lingered over; how do we fly the thoughts wherein once consisted our greatest happiness, and seek from other sources, impressions less painful, because unconnected with the past. Still the bereavement of death is never devoid of a sense of holy calm, a sort of solemn peace connected with the memory of the lost one. In the sleep that knows not waking, we see the end of earthly troubles — in the silence of the grave, come no sounds of this world's contention — the winds that stir the rank grass of the churchyard breathe, at least, repose. Not so when fate has severed us from those we loved best during lifetime; when the fortunes we hoped to link with our own are torn asunder from us; when the hour comes when we must turn from the path we had followed with pleasure and happiness, and seek another road in life, bearing with us not only all the memory of the past, but all the speculation on the future. There is no sorrow, no affliction, like this.

It was thus I viewed my joyless fortune — with such depressing reflections I thought over the past. What mattered it now how my career might turn: there lived not one to care whether rank or honour, disgrace or death, were to be my portion. The glorious path

I often longed to tread 'opened for me now, without exciting one spark of enthusiasm: so is it even in our most selfish desires, we live less for ourselves than others.

If my road in life seemed to present few features to hang hopes on, he who sat beside me appeared still more depressed. Seldom speaking, and then but in monosyllables, he remained sunk in reverie. And thus passed the days of our journey, when on the third evening we came in sight of Coblenz. Then indeed there burst upon my astonished sight one of those scenes which once seen, are never forgotten. From the gentle declivity which we were now descending, the view extended several miles in every direction. Beneath us lay the city of Coblenz, its spires and domes shining like gilded bronze as the rays of the setting sun fell upon them; the Moselle swept along one side of the town till it mingled its eddies with the broad Rhine, now one sheet of liquid gold; the long pontoon bridge, against whose dark cut-waters the bright stream broke in sparkling circles, trembled beneath the dull roll of artillery and baggage-waggons, which might be seen issuing from the town, and serpentineing their course along the river's edge for miles till they were lost in the narrow glen by which the Lahn flows into the Rhine; beyond rose the great precipice of rock, with its crowning fortress of Ehrenbreitstein, along whose battlemented walls, almost lost in the heavy clouds of evening, might be seen dark specks moving from place to place — the soldiers of the garrison looking down from their eyrie on the war-tide that flowed beneath. Lower down the river many boats were crossing, in which, as the sunlight shone, one could mark the glancing of arms and

the glitter of uniforms; while farther again, and in deep shadow, rose the solitary towers of the ruined castle of Lahneck, its shattered walls and grass-grown battlements standing clearly out against the evening sky.

Far as we were off, every breeze that stirred bore towards us the softened swell of military music, which, even when too faint to trace, made the air tremulous with its martial sounds. Along the ramparts of the city were crowds of townspeople gazing with anxious wonderment at the spectacle, for none knew, save the generals in command of divisions, the destination of that mighty force — the greatest, Europe had ever seen up to that period. Such indeed were the measures taken to ensure secrecy, that none were permitted to cross the frontier without a special authority from the minister for foreign affairs; the letters in the various post-offices were detained, and even travellers were denied post-horses on the great roads to the eastward, lest intelligence might be conveyed to Germany of the movement in progress. Meanwhile at Mannheim, at Spire, at Strasbourg, and at Coblenz, the long columns streamed forth, whose eagles were soon destined to meet in the great plains of southern Germany. Such was the gorgeous spectacle that each moment grew more palpable to our astonished senses — grander far than any thing painting could realise — more spirit-stirring than the grandest words that poet ever sung.

“The cuirassiers and the dragoons of the guard are yonder,” said the general, as he directed his glass to a large square of the town, where a vast mass of dismounted cavalry were standing: “you see how punctual they are; we are but two hours behind our time, and they are awaiting our arrival.”

"And do we move forward to-night, general?" asked I, in some surprise.

"Yes, and every night. The marches are to be made fourteen hours each day. There go the lancers of Berg — you see their scarlet dolmans, don't you? and yonder, in the three large boats, beyond the point, there are the sappers of the guard — What are the shouts I hear — whence comes that cheering?"

"Oh, I see; it's a vivandière, her horse has backed into the river. See — see — she is going to swim him over. Look how the current takes him down — Bravely done, faith. She heads him to the stream — it won't do though, she must be carried down." Just at this critical moment a boat shoots out from under the cliff — a few strokes of the oars, and they are alongside — there's a splash and a shout, and the skiff moves on; "and now I see they have given her a rope, and are towing her and her horse across."

"See how the old spirit comes back with the first blast of the trumpet," said the old general, as his eyes flashed with enthusiasm. "That damsel there, I'll warrant ye, she'd have thought twice about stepping over a rivulet in the streets of Paris yesterday, and look at her now. Well done — gallantly done. See how she spurs him up the bank! *Ma foi*, Mademoiselle, you'll have no lack of lovers for that achievement."

A few minutes more and we entered the town, whose streets were thronged with soldiers hurrying on to their different corps, and eager townsfolk asking a hundred questions, to which of course few waited to reply.

"This way, general," said an officer in undress, who

recognised General D'Auvergne. "The cavalry of the third division is stationed in the square."

Passing through a narrow street, through which the caleche had barely room to pass, we now found ourselves in the Place, a handsome space surrounded with a double row of trees, under which the dragoons were lying, holding the bridles of their horses.

The general had scarcely put foot to ground, when the trumpets sounded the call. The superior officers came running forward to greet him. Taking the arm of a short man, in the uniform of the cuirassiers, the general entered a *café*, near, while I became the centre of some dozen officers, all eagerly asking the news from Paris; and whether the emperor had yet left the capital. It was not without considerable astonishment I then perceived how totally ignorant they all were of the destination of the army: many alleging it was destined for Russia; and others equally positive that the Prussians were the object of attack; the arguments in support of each opinion being wonderfully ingenious, and only deficient in one respect, having not a particle of fact for their foundation. In the midst of these conjecturings came a new subject for discussion; for one of the group who had just received a letter from his brother, a page at the Tuilleries, was reading the contents aloud for the benefit of the rest —

"Jules says that they are all astray as to the emperor's movements; Duroc has left Paris suddenly, but no one knows for where; the only thing certain is, a hot campaign is to open somewhere — one hundred and eighty thousand men —"

"Bah!" said an old white-moustached major, with

a look of evident unbelief; "we never had forty with the army of the Sambre."

"And what then?" said another, fiercely; "do you compare your army of the Sambre, your *sans culottes* republicans, with the imperial troops?"

The old major's face became deeply crimsoned, and with a muttered *à demain*, he walked away.

"Go after him, Amedée," said another; "you had no right to say that."

"Not I, faith," said the other, carelessly; "there is a grudge between us these three weeks past, and we may as well have it out. Go on with the letter, Henri."

"Oh, it is filled with court gossip," said the reader, negligently. "Ha! what's this, though — the post-script —"

"I have just time to tell you the strangest bit of news we have chanced upon for some time past. The emperor has this moment married old General D'Auvergne to the very handsomest girl in the empress's suite, Mademoiselle de Meudon. There is a rumour afloat about the old man having made her his heir, and desiring to confer her hand on some young fellow of his own choosing; but this passion to make court matches, which has seized his majesty lately, stops at nothing; and it is whispered that old Madame d'Orvalle is actually terrified at every levee, lest she should be disposed of, to one of the new marshals. I must say that the general looks considerably put out by the arrangement; not unnaturally, perhaps, as he is likely to pass the honeymoon in the field; while his aid-de-camp, a certain Monsieur Burke, whose name you

may remember figuring in the affair of Pichegru and George —'

"Perhaps it were as well, Sir," said I quietly, "that I should tell you the person alluded to is myself. I have no desire to learn how your correspondent speaks of me; nor, I take it for granted, do these gentlemen desire to canvass me in my own hearing; with your leave, then, I shall withdraw."

"A word, Monsieur, one word, first," said the officer, whose insolent taunt had already offended the veteran major; "we are most of us here staff officers, and I need not say accustomed to live pretty much together. Will you favour us, then, with a little explanation as to the manner in which you escaped a trial in that business: your name, if I mistake not, did not figure before the tribunal after the first day?"

"Well, Sir; and then?"

"And then? why, there is one only explanation in such a circumstance."

"And that is, if I may make so bold —"

"That the '*mouchard*' fares better than his victim."

"I believe, Sir," said I, "I comprehend your meaning; I hope there will be no fear of your mistaking mine." With that I drew off the long gauntlet glove I wore, and struck him across the face.

Every man sprang backwards as I did so, as though a shell had fallen in the midst of us; while a deep voice called out from behind —

"Le Capitaine Amedée Pichot is under arrest."

I turned, and beheld the prevost marshal with his guard approach, and take my adversary's sword from him.

"What charge is this, marshal?" said he, as a livid colour spread over his cheek.

"Your duel of yesterday, capitaine; you seem to forget all about it already."

"Whenever, and wherever you please, Sir," said I, passing close beside him, and speaking in a whisper.

He nodded, without uttering a word in reply, and moved after the guard; while the others dispersed silently, and left me standing alone in the Place.

What would I not have given at that moment for but one friend to counsel and advise me: and yet, save the general, to whom I dared not speak on such a subject, I had not one in the whole world. It was, indeed, but too true, that life had little value for me; yet never did I contemplate a duel with more abhorrence. The insult I had inflicted, however, could have no other result. While I reasoned thus, the door of the *café* opened, and the general appeared.

"Burke," cried he, "come in here, and make a hasty supper; you must be in the saddle in half an hour."

"Quite ready, Sir."

"I know it, my lad. Your orders are there: ride forward to Ettingen, and prepare the billets for the fourth demi-brigade, which will reach that village by to-morrow evening; you'll have time for something to eat, and a glass of wine, before the orderly arrives. This piece of duty is put on you, because a certain Captain Pichot, the only one of the commissaries' department who can speak German, has just been put under arrest for a duel he fought yesterday. I wish the court martial would shoot the fellow, with all my heart and soul; he's a perfect curse to the whole di-

vision. In any case, if he escape this time, I'll keep my eye on him, and he'll scarce get clear through my hands, I warrant him."

It may be supposed that I heard these words with no common emotion, bearing as they did so closely on my own circumstances at the moment: but I hung down my head and affected to eat, while the old general walked hastily up and down the *salon*, muttering, half aloud, heavy denunciations on the practice of duelling, which, at any cost of life, he resolved to put down in his command.

"Done already; why, man, you've eaten nothing. Well, then, I see the orderly without: you've got a capital moonlight for your ride; and so, *au revoir*."

"Good-bye, Sir," said I, as I sprang into the saddle; "and now for Ettingen."

CHAPTER XIII.

The march on the Danube.

THERE is a strange, unnatural kind of pleasure felt sometimes in the continued attacks of evil fortune: the dogged courage with which we bear up against the ills of fate, swimming strongly as the waves grow rougher, has its own meed of consolation. It is only at such a time, perhaps, that the really independent spirit of our natures is in the ascendant, and that we can stand amid the storm, conscious of our firmness, and bid the winds "blow and crack their cheeks." Yet, through how many sorrows must one have waded, ere he reach this point — through what trials must he have passed — how must hope have paled, and flickered, and died out — how must all self-love, all ambition, all desire itself have withered within us — till we become like

the mere rock amid the breakers, against which the waves beat in vain! When that hour comes, the heart has grown cold and callous — the affections have dried up — and man looks no more upon his fellow-men as brothers. Towards this sad condition I found myself rapidly verging — the isolation of my homeless, friendless state — the death of my hopes — the uncheered path in which I walked — all conspired to make me feel depressed — and I perceived that a half recklessness was already stealing over me — and that, in my indifference as to fortune, now lay my greatest consolation. There was a time when such a rencontre as lately befel me had made me miserable, till the hour came when I should meet my adversary: now, my blood boiled with no indignant passion — no current of angry vengeance stirred through my veins — a stupid sullenness was over me, and I cared nothing what might happen. And if this state became not permanent, I owe it to youth alone — the mainspring of many of our best endeavours.

We had travelled some seven or eight miles, when we stopped for a few seconds at the door of a cabaret, and then I discovered for the first time that my old friend Pioche was the corporal of our little party. To my slight reproach for his not having sooner made himself known to me, the honest fellow replied, "That he saw I was low in spirits about something, and did not wish to obtrude upon me. Not but, after all, *mon Lieutenant*, the best way is always to 'face front' against bad luck, and charge through — *sapermint*, that's the way we did at Marengo, when Desaix' corps was cut off from the left — but, pardon, *mon Officier*, I forgot you were not there." There was something so pleasant in the gruff courtesy of the hardy cuiras-

sier, that I willingly led him in to speak of his former life — a subject which, once entered on, he followed as fancy or memory suggested.

“I used to feel low-spirited myself, once,” said Pioche, as he smoothed down his great moustache with a complacent motion of his fingers — “I used to be very low in heart when I entered the service first, and saw all my old schoolfellows and companions, winning their epaulettes, and becoming captains and colonels — ay, *parbleu* — and Maréchals too; while, because I could not read, I was to remain all my life in the ranks — as if one could not force a pallisade, nor break through a square, till he had stuffed his head with learning. All this made me very sad, and I would sit brooding over it for hours long; but at last I began to think my own lot was not the worst after all — my duty was easily done, and, when over, I could sleep sound till the *réveille* blew. I ran no danger of being scolded by the *petit Caporal*, because my division was not somewhere yesterday, nor in some other place to-day. He never came with a frown to ask me why I had not captured another howitzer, and taken more prisoners! No, faith. It was always, ‘Well done, Pioche — bravely done, *mon enfant* — here’s a piece of twenty francs to drink my health;’ or perhaps he’d mutter between his teeth, ‘That honest fellow there would make a better general than one half of them’ — not that he was in earnest, you know — but still it was pleasant just to hear it.”

“And yet, Pioche,” said I, “it does surprise me, why, seeing that this want of learning was the bar to your promotion, you did not —”

“And so I did, *mon Lieutenant*; at least, I tried to learn to read. *Morbleu!* it was a weary time for

me. I'd rather be under arrest three days a week, than be at it again. Mademoiselle Minette, she was the 'Vivandière' of ours, undertook to teach me; and I used to go over to the canteen every evening after drill. Many a sad heart I had over these same lessons. *Saper-lote*, I could learn the look of every man in a brigade, before I could know the letters in the alphabet, they looked so confoundedly alike when they stood up all in a line. The only fellows I could distinguish were the big ones, that were probably the sergeants and *sous-officiers*; and when my eye was fixed on one column, it would stray away to another, and then Mademoiselle would laugh — and that would lead to something else. *Et ma foi*, the spelling-book was soon thrown aside, and lessons given up for that evening."

"I suppose Mademoiselle Minette was pretty, Pioche."

"Was! ay, and is too. What! *mon* Lieutenant, did you never see her on parade? She's the handsomest girl in the army, and rides so well — *milles canons*! She might have been a great lady before this, if she'd have left the regiment — but no, she'd die first; her father was tambour-major with us, and killed at Gröningen, when she was only an infant — and we used to carry her about in our arms on the march, and hand her from one to another. I have seen her pass from the leading files to the baggage-guard, on a long summer's day — that I have. *Le petit Caporal* knows her well — she gave him a gourd full of *eau-de-vie* at Cairo, when he was so faint, he could scarcely speak. It was after that he saw her in the breach at Acre — one of our fellows was lying wounded in the ruins, and Mademoiselle waited till the storming party fell back, and then ran up to him with her flask in her hand. 'Whose

pretty ancles are these? I think I ought to know them,' said an officer, as she passed along. 'No flattery will do with me, Monsieur,' cried Minette: 'it's hard enough to get one's living here, without giving Nantz brandy for nothing.' *Sacristi!* when the laugh made her turn about, she saw it was the *petit Caporal* himself who spoke to her. Poor Minette, she blushed scarlet, and nearly dropped with shame; but that did not prevent her dashing up the breach towards the wounded man, not that it was of any use though — he was dead when she got up."

"I should like much to see Mademoiselle. Is she still with the fourth?"

"Yes, *mon* Lieutenant — I parted with her a few hours ago;" a half-suppressed sigh that followed these words showed that the worthy corporal was touched on the most tender key of his nature — and for some time he lapsed into a silence I could not venture to break. At length, desiring to give the conversation a turn, I asked if he knew the Capitaine Pichot.

"Know him!" cried Pioche, almost bounding in his saddle as he spoke. "That I do. *Peste!* I have good reason to know him. See there." With that he lifted the curled moustache from his upper lip, and disclosed to my view a blue scar that marked one side of his mouth. "That was his doing."

"Indeed! How so, pray?"

"I'll tell you: we were in garrison at Metz, where, as you know, the great commissariat station is held — thousands of cannon and mortars, shells and shot, and tons of powder without end. Well, the orders were very strict against smoking — any man found with a pipe in his mouth was sentenced to a week in the 'salle de

police,' and I can't say what else beside. When we marched into the town this order stared us every where in the face — a great placard, with big letters, which they who could read said was against smoking. Now, most of us came from Alsace, and it was pretty much like setting a fish to live on dry land, bidding us go without tobacco. As for me, I smoke just as I breathe, without knowing or thinking of it. My pipe lies in my mouth as naturally as my foot rests in the stirrup: and so, although I intended to obey the order, I knew well the time might come when, just from not thinking, I should be caught smoking away — for if I were on guard over a magazine, it would be all the same — I could not help it. So I resolved, as the only way not to be caught tripping, to leave all my pipes in a secret place, till the time came for us to leave Metz — an hour, I need not say, we all anxiously longed for. This I did," continued Pioche, "that same evening, and all went on favourably for some time, when one night as I was returning to quarters, the devil, who meddles with every thing in this world, made me stick my hands into the pocket of my undress jacket, and I there discovered a little bit of a pipe about the length of one joint of your thumb — a poor scrubby thing of clay, sure enough — but there it was, and, worse still, ready filled with tobacco. Had it been a good-sized meerschaum, with a tassel and an amber mouth-piece, I had resisted like a man; but the temptation came in so humble a shape, I thought I was only guilty of a small sin in transgressing, and so I lit my little friend, and went gaily along towards the barracks. Just as I passed the corner of the market-place, I heard a great noise of voices and laughing in a café, and recognised

the tones of our major and some of the officers, as they sat sipping their wine in the verandah. Before I could raise my hand to my mouth, Le Capitaine Pichot cried out — ‘Halte, là! — right about face — attention! — left wheel — eyes front.’ This I did, as if on parade, and stood stock still — when suddenly crack went a noise, and a pistol bullet smashed the pipe in two, and grazed my lip, when a roar of laughing followed, as he called out louder than before — ‘quick march!’ — and I stepped out to my quarters, never turning my head right or left, not knowing what other ball practice might be in store for me. *Tonnerre de Dieu!* a little windage of the shot might have cost me every tooth I have in the world!”

“It was a cruel jest, Pioche, and you’re a good-humoured fellow to take it so easily.”

“Not so, Lieutenant. I had no punishment afterwards, and was well content to be quit for the fright!”

With such stray memories of his campaigning days, did Pioche beguile the way — now moralizing over the chances and changes of a soldier’s fortune — now comforting himself with some pleasant reflection, that, even in his own humble walk, he had assisted at some of the greatest triumphs of the French armies. Of the future he spoke with the easy confidence of one, who felt that in the Emperor’s guidance there could be full trust — both of the cause being a just one, and the result victorious. A perfect type of his class, his bravery was only to be equalled by the implicit confidence he felt in his leader. That the troops of any country, no matter how numerous and well equipped, could resist a French army, was a problem he could not even entertain. The thing was too absurd: and if Napoleon

did not at that moment wield undisputed sway over the whole of Europe, it was simply owing to his excess of moderation, and the willing sacrifice of his ambition to his greater love of liberty.

I confess, if I were sometimes tempted to smile at the simplicity of the honest soldier, I was more often carried away by his warm enthusiasm; so frequently, too, did he interweave in his narrative the mention of those great victories, whose fame was unquestionable, that in my assent to the facts, I went a great way in my concurrence with the inferences he deduced from them. And thus we travelled on for several days, in advance of the division, regulating the halting-places and the billets, according to the nature and facilities of the country. The towns and villages in our "route" presented an aspect of the most profound peace; and however strange it seemed, yet each day attested how completely ignorant the people were of the advance of that mighty army that now, in four vast columns of march, was pouring its thousands into the heart of Germany. The Princes of Baden and Darmstadt, through whose territories we passed, had not as yet given in their adherence to the Emperor; and the inhabitants of those countries seemed perplexed and confused at the intentions of their powerful neighbour, whose immense trains of ammunition, and enormous parks of artillery, filled every road, and blocked up every village.

At length we reached Manheim, where a portion of the corps of Maréchal Davoust were in waiting to join us; and there we first learned by the imperial bulletin, the object of the war, and the destination of the troops. The document was written by Napoleon himself, and bore abundant evidence of his style. After the usual

programme, attesting his sincere love for peace, and his desire for the cultivation of those happy and industrious habits which make nations more prosperous than glorious, it went on to speak of the great coalition between Russia and Austria, which, in union with the "*perfidie* Albion," had no other thought nor wish, than the abasement and dismemberment of France. "But, soldiers!" continued he, "your Emperor is in the midst of you. France itself, in all its majesty, is at your back, and you are but the advanced guard of a mighty people! There are fatigues and privations, battles and forced marches, before you; but let them oppose to us every resistance they are able — we swear never to cry, halt! till we have planted our eagles on the territory of our enemies!"

We halted two days at Mannheim to permit some regiments to come up, and then marched forward to Nordlingen, which place the Emperor himself had only quitted the night before. Here the report reached us that a smart affair had taken place the previous morning, between an Austrian division and a portion of Ney's advanced guard, in which we had rather the worst of it, and had lost some prisoners. The news excited considerable discontent among the troops, and increased their impatience to move forward to a very great degree. Meanwhile, the different divisions of the French army were converging towards Ulm, from the north, south, and west; and every hour brought them nearer to that devoted spot, which as yet, in the security of an enormous garrison, never dreamed of sudden attack.

The corps of Soult was now pushed forward to Augsburg, and extended by a line of communication to Meiningen, the only channel of communication which

remained open to the enemy. The quartier-général of the Emperor was established at Zummerhausen, Ney was at Guntzbourg, Marmont threatened in the west, and Bernadotte, arriving by forced marches from Prussia, hovered in the north, so that Ulm was invested in every direction at one blow, and that in a space of time almost inconceivable.

While these immense combinations were being effected, requiring, as they did, an enormous extent of circumference to march over, before the fortress could be thus enclosed, as it were, within our grasp, our astonishment increased daily, that the Austrians delayed to give battle; but, as if terror-stricken, they waited on, day after day, while the measures for their ruin were accomplishing. At length a desperate *sortie* was made from the garrison, and a large body of troops escaping by the left bank of the Danube, directed their course towards Bohemia; while another corps, in the opposite direction, forced back Ney's advanced guard, and took the road towards Nordlingen. Having directed a strong detachment in pursuit of this latter corps, which was commanded by the Archduke Frederick himself, the Emperor closed in around Ulm, and, forcing the passage of the river at Elchingen, prepared for the final attack.

While these dispositions were being effected, the cavalry brigade under General D'Auvergne, consisting of three regiments of heavy dragoons, the fourth cuirassiers and eighth hussars, continued to descend the left bank of the Danube in pursuit of a part of the Austrian garrison which had taken that line in retreat towards Vienna. We followed as far as Guntzbourg without coming up with them, and there the news of the capitulation of Meiningen, with its garrison of six

thousand men, to Maréchal Soult, reached us, along with an order to return to Ulm.

Up to this time, all I had seen of war was forced marches, bivouacks hastily broken up, hurried movements in advance and retreat, the fatigue of night parties, and a continual alert. At first the hourly expectation of coming in sight of the enemy kept up our spirits; but when day after day passed, and the same pursuit followed, where the pursued never appeared — the younger soldiers grumbled loudly at fatigues undertaken without object, and, as it seemed to them, by mistake.

On the night of the 17th of October we bivouacked within a league of Ulm. Scarcely were the picquets formed for the night, when orders came for the whole brigade to assemble under arms at daybreak. A thousand rumours were abroad as to the meaning of the order, but none came near the true solution; indeed, the difficulty was increased by the added command, that the regiments should appear "*en grande tenue*," or in full dress. I saw that my old commander made a point of keeping me in suspense as to the morrow, and affected, as much as possible, an air of indifference on the subject. He had himself arrived late from Ulm, where he had seen the Emperor, and amused me by mentioning the surprise of an Austrian aid-de-camp, who, sent to deliver a letter, found his majesty sitting with his boots off, and stretched before a bivouack fire.

"Yes," said Napoleon, divining at once his astonishment, "it is even so. Your master wished to remind me of my old trade, and I hope that the imperial purple has not made me forget its lessons."

By daybreak the next morning our brigade was in the saddle, and in motion towards the quartier-général — a gently rising ground, surmounted by a farm-house, where the Emperor had fixed his quarters. As we mounted the hill we came in sight of the whole army drawn up in battle array. They stood in columns of divisions, with artillery and cavalry between them, the bands of the various regiments in front.

The day was a brilliant one, and heightened the effect of the scene. Beyond us lay Ulm — silent as if untenanted. Not a sentinel appeared on the walls; the very flag had disappeared from the battlements; our surprise was great at this; but how was it increased, as the rumour fled from mouth to mouth — Ulm has capitulated — thirty-five thousand men have become prisoners of war. Ere the first moments of wonder had ceased, the staff of the Emperor was seen passing along the line, and finally taking up its station on the hill, while the regimental bands burst forth into one crash — the most spirit-stirring and exciting. The proud notes swelled and filled the air, as the sun, bursting forth with increased brilliancy, tipped every helmet and banner, and displayed the mighty hosts in all the splendour of their pageantry. Beneath the hill, stretched a vast plain in the direction of Neubourg, and here we at first supposed it was the Emperor's intention to review the troops; but a very different scene was destined to pass on that spot.

Suddenly, a single gun boomed out, and as the lazy smoke moved heavily along the earth, the gates of Ulm opened, and the head of an Austrian column appeared: not with beat of drum, or colours flying, did they advance — but slow in step, with arms reversed, and their

heads downcast, they marched on towards the mound; defiling beneath this, they moved into the plain, and corps by corps, piled their arms, and resumed their "route," the white line serpentining along the vast plain, and stretching away into the dim distance. Never was a sight so sad as this! All that war can present of suffering and bloodshed, all that the battle-field can show of dead and dying, were nothing to the miserable abasement of those thousands, who from daybreak till noon poured on their unceasing tide.

On the hill beside the Emperor stood several officers in white uniform, whose sad faces and suffering looks, attested the misery of their hearts. "Better a thousand deaths than such humiliation!" was the muttered cry of every man about me; while in very sorrow at such a scene, the tears coursed down the hardy cheeks of many a bronzed soldier, and some turned away their heads, unable to behold the spectacle.

Seventy pieces of cannon, with a long train of ammunition waggons, and four thousand cavalry horses, brought up the rear of this melancholy procession — the spoils of the capitulation of Ulm. Truly, if that day were, as the imperial bulletin announced it, "one of the most glorious for France," it was also the darkest in the history of Austria — when thirty-two regiments of infantry and fifteen of cavalry, with artillery and siege defences of every kind, laid down their arms and surrendered themselves prisoners. Thus in fifteen days from the passing of the Rhine, was the campaign begun and ended, and the Austrian empire prostrate at the feet of Napoleon.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Canteen.

THE Emperor returned that night to Elchingen, accompanied by a numerous staff, among whom was the General D'Auvergne. I remember well the toilsome ascent of the steep town, which, built on a cliff above the Danube, was now little better than a heap of ruins, from the assault of Ney's division two days before. Scrambling our way over fallen houses and massive fragments of masonry, we reached the square that forms the highest point of the city; from thence we looked down upon the great plain, with the majestic Danube winding along for miles; in the valley lay Ulm — now sad and silent; no watchfires blazed along its deserted ramparts, and through its open gates there streamed the idle tide of soldiers and camp followers, curious to see the place which once they had almost deemed impregnable. The quartier-général was established here, and the different staffs disposed of themselves, as well as they were able, throughout the houses near. Most of these, indeed, had been deserted by their inhabitants, whose dread of the French was a feeling ministered to by every artifice in the power of the Austrian government. As for me, I was but a young campaigner, and might from sheer ignorance have passed my night in the open air, when by good fortune I caught sight of my old companion, Pioche, hurrying along a narrow street, carrying a basket well stored with bottles on his arm.

"Ah, *mon* Lieutenant, you here, and not supped yet, I'd wager a crown?"

"You'd win it too, Pioche; nor do I see very great chance of my doing so."

"Come along with me, Sir; Mademoiselle Minette has just opened her canteen in the flower-market — such it was once, they tell me; but there is little odour left there now, save such as contract powder gives. But, no matter, you'll have a roast capon and sausages, and some of the Austrian wine — I have just secured half a dozen bottles here."

I need scarcely say that this was an invitation there was no declining, and I joined the corporal at once, and hurried on to Mademoiselle's quarters. We had not proceeded far, when the noise of voices speaking and singing in a loud tone, announced that we were approaching the canteen.

"You hear them, *mon* Lieutenant," said Pioche, with a look of delight — "you hear the rogues. *Par St. Jacques*, they know where to make themselves merry. Good wine for drinking, lodging for nothing, fire for the trouble of lighting it, are brave inducements to enjoy life."

"But it's a canteen; surely, Mademoiselle is paid —"

"Not the first night of a campaign, I suppose," said he with a voice of rebuke. "*Parbleu!* that would be a pretty affair. No, no; each man brings what he can find, drinks what he is able, and leaves the rest — which, after all, is a very fair stock in trade to begin with; and so now, *mon* Lieutenant, to commence operations regularly, just sling this ham on your sabre over your shoulder, and take this turkey carelessly in your hand — that's it — here we are — follow me."

Passing through an arched gateway we entered a little courtyard, where several horses were picquetted, the ground about them being strewn with straw knee-deep; cavalry saddles, holsters, and sheep-skins, lay

confusedly on every side, along with sabres and carbines; a great lamp, detached from its position over the street entrance, was suspended from a lance out of a window, and threw its light over the scene. Stepping cautiously through this chaotic heap, we reached a glass door, from within which the riotous sounds were most audibly issuing. Pioche pushed it open, and we entered a large room, full fifty feet in length, at one end of which, under a species of canopy, formed by two old regimental colours, sat Mademoiselle Minette — for so I guessed to be a very pretty brunette, with a most decidedly Parisian look about her air and toilette; a table, covered with a snow-white napkin, was in front of her, on which lay a large bouquet and an open book, in which she appeared to be writing as we came in. The room on either side was filled by small tables, around which sat parties drinking, card-playing, singing, or quarrelling, as it might be, with a degree of energy and vociferation only campaigning can give an idea of.

The first thing which surprised me was, that all ranks in the service seemed confusedly mixed up together, there being no distinction of class whatever: captains and corporals, sergeants, lieutenants, colonels, and tambour majors, were inextricably commingled, hob-nobbing, hand-shaking, and even kissing in turn; — that most fraternal and familiar “Tu” of dearest friendship, being heard on every side.

Resisting a hundred invitations to join some party or other as he passed up the room, Pioche led me forward towards Mademoiselle Minette, to present me in due form ere I took my place.

The honest corporal, who would have charged a square without blinking, seemed actually to tremble as

he came near the pretty Vivandière, and when, with a roguish twinkle of her dark eye, and a half smile on her saucy lip, she said, "*Ah, c'est toi, Gros Pioche?*" the poor fellow could only mutter a "*Oui, Mademoiselle,*" in a voice scarce loud enough to be heard.

"And, Monsieur," said she, "whom have I the honour to see?"

"Is my Lieutenant, Mademoiselle; or he is aid-de-camp of my general, which comes to the same thing."

With a few words of gracious civility, well and neatly expressed, Mademoiselle welcomed me to the canteen, which she said had often been graced by the presence of General D'Auvergne himself.

"Yes, by St. Denis," cried Pioche, with energy, "Prince Murat, and Maréchal Davoust, too, have been here" — dropping his voice to a whisper, he added something that called a faint blush to Mademoiselle's cheek as she replied —

"You think so, do you?" Then turning to me, asked if I were not disposed to sup.

"Yes, that he is," interrupted Pioche, "and here is the *matériel*," with which he displayed his pannier of bottles, and pointed to the spoils which, following his directions, I carried in my hands. The corporal having despatched the fowls to the kitchen, proceeded to arrange a little table at a short distance from where Mademoiselle sat — an arrangement, I could perceive, which called forth some rather angry looks from those around the room, and I could overhear more than one muttered — *Sacre!* as to the ambitious pretension of the "Gros Pioche."

He himself paid little, if any, attention to these signs of discontent, but seemed wholly occupied in perfecting

the table arrangements, which he did with the skill and despatch of a tavern waiter.

"Here, *mon* Lieutenant, this is your place," said he with a bow, as he placed a chair for me at the head of the board, and then with a polite obeisance to the lady, he added, "*Avec permission, Mademoiselle,*" and took his own seat at the side.

A very appetizing dish made its appearance at this moment, and notwithstanding my curiosity to watch the proceedings of the party, and my admiration for Mademoiselle herself, hunger carried the day, and I was soon too deeply engaged in the discussion of my supper to pay much attention to aught else. It was just then, that, forgetting where I was, and unmindful that I was not enjoying the regular fare of an inn, I called out, as if to the waiter, for "bread" — a roar of laughter ran through the room at my mistake, when a dark-whiskered little fellow, in an undress frock, stuck his small sword into a loaf, and handed it to me from the table where he sat.

There was something in the act which rather puzzled me, and might have continued longer to do so, had not Pioche whispered me in a low voice — "Take it, take it."

I reached out my hand for the purpose, when just as I had caught the loaf, with a slight motion of his wrist he disengaged the point of the weapon, and gave me a scratch on the back of my hand. The gesture I made called forth a renewed peal of laughing, and I now perceived, from the little man's triumphant look at his companions, that the whole thing was intended as an insult. Resolving, however, to go quietly in the

matter, I held out my hand when it was still bleeding, and said — “You perceive, Sir.”

“Ah, an accident, *morbleu*,” said he, with a careless shrug of his shoulders, and a half leer of impertinent indifference.

“So is this also,” replied I, as, springing up, I seized the sword he was returning to its scabbard, and smashed the blade across my knee.

“Well done, well done,” cried twenty voices in a breath, while the whole room rose in a confused manner to take one side or other in the contest — several crowding around the little man, whose voice had suddenly lost its tone of easy impertinence, and was now heard swearing away, with the most guttural intonation.

“What kind of a swordsman are you?” whispered Pioche in my ear.

“Sufficiently expert to care little for an enemy of his calibre.”

“Ah, you don’t know that,” replied he; “it’s François, the *Maître d’armes* of the fourth.”

“You must not fight him, Monsieur,” said Mademoiselle, as she laid her hand on mine, and looked up into my face with a most expressive glance.

“They are waiting for you without *mon* Lieutenant,” said an old sergeant-major, touching his cap as he spoke.

“Come along,” said Pioche, with a deeply muttered oath; “and, by the blood of St. Louis, it shall be the last time Maître François shows his skill in fence, if I cost them the fire of a platoon to-morrow.”

I was hurried along by the crowd to the court, a hundred different advisers whispering their various counsels in my ears as I went.

“Take care of his lunge in tierce — mind that,” cried one.

“Push him outside the arm — outside, remember — take my advice, young man,” said an old *sous officier*; “close on him at once, take his point when he gives it, and make sure of your own weapon.”

“No bad plan either,” cried two or three — “Monsieur Auguste is right; François can’t bear the cold steel — and if he sees it close, he loses his head altogether.”

The courtyard was already cleared for action — the horses picquetted in one corner, the straw removed, and a blaze of light from all the lamps and candles of the supper-room showed the ground as clearly as at noon-day. While my antagonist was taking off his coat and vest, an operation I did not choose to imitate, I took a rapid survey of the scene — and, notwithstanding the rush of advisers around me, was sufficiently collected to decide on my mode of acting.

“Come, *mon* Lieutenant, off with your frock,” said an officer at my side — “even if you don’t care for the advantage of a free sword-arm, those fellows yonder won’t believe it all fair, if you do not strip.”

“Yes, yes, take it off,” said a fellow in the crowd, “your fine epaulettes may as well escape tarnishing — and that new coat, too, will be all the better without a hole in it.”

I hastily threw off my coat and waistcoat, when the crowd fell back, and the *Maître d’armes* advancing into the open space with a light and nimble step, cried out, “*En garde, Monsieur.*” I stood my ground, and crossed my sword with his.

For a few seconds I contented myself with merely

observing my adversary, who handled his weapon not only with all the skill of an accomplished swordsman, but with a dexterity that showed me he was playing off his art before his companions.

As if to measure his distance, he made two or three slight passes over the guard of my sword, and then grating his blade against mine with that peculiar motion which bodes attack, he fixed his eyes on mine, to draw off my attention from his intended thrust. The quickness and facility with which his weapon changed from side to side of mine, the easy motion of his wrist, and the rigid firmness of his arm, all showed me I was no match for him—although one of the best of my day at the military school—and I did not venture to proceed beyond mere defence. He saw this, and by many a trick endeavoured to induce an attack—now dropping his point carelessly, to address a monosyllable to a friend near—now throwing open his guard, as if from negligence. At length, as if tired with waiting, he called out—

“*Que cela finisse,*” and rushed in on me.

The rapidity of the assault for a second or so, completely overcame me; and though I defended myself mechanically, I could neither follow his weapon with my eye, nor anticipate his intended thrust. Twice, his point touched my sword-arm above the wrist, and by a slight wound there, saved my lungs from being pierced. At last, after a desperate rally, in which he broke in on my guard, he made a fearful lunge at my chest; I bent forward, and received his blade in the muscles of my back—when, with a wheel round, I smashed the sword in me, and buried my own, up to the hilt in his body. He fell, bathed in blood; and I,

staggering backwards, was caught in Pioche's arms, at the moment when all consciousness was fast leaving me.

A few minutes after, I came to myself, and found that I was lying on a heap of straw in the yard, while two regimental surgeons were most industriously engaged in trying to stop the hemorrhage of my wounds.

With little interest in my own fate, I could not help feeling anxious about my antagonist. They shook their heads mournfully in reply to my question, and desired me to be as calm as possible, for my life hung on a very thread. The dressing completed, I was carried into the house, and laid on a bed in a small, neat-looking chamber, which I heard, as they carried me along, Mademoiselle had kindly placed at my disposal. She herself assisted to place the pillow beneath my head, and then with noiseless gesture closed the curtains of the window, and took her seat at the bedside.

The moment the others had left the room, I turned to ask for the *Maître d'armes*: but she could only say that his companions of the fourth had carried him away to the ambulance, refusing all offers of aid, except from the surgeons of their own corps.

"They say," added she, with a *naïve* simplicity, "that François is not made like other folk, and that the only doctors who understand him are in the fourth regiment. However that may be, it will puzzle them sadly this time — you have given him his *coup de congé*."

"I hope not, sincerely," said I, with a shudder.

"And why not," cried Mademoiselle in astonishment; "is it not a good service you render to the whole brigade? Would not the division be all the

happier if such as he, and Pichot, and the rest of them —”

“Pichot — Amedée Pichot?”

“Yes, Amedée Pichot, to be sure — But what’s that knocking outside? Ah, there’s Pioche at the window!”

Mademoiselle arose and walked towards the door, but before she reached it, it was opened, and General D’Auvergne entered the room.

“Is he here?” asked he in a low voice.

“Yes, general,” said Mademoiselle, with a curtsey, as she placed the chair for him to sit down. “He is much better — I’ll wait outside till you want me,” added she, as she left the room and closed the door.

“Come, come, my boy,” said the kind old man, as he took my hand in his, “don’t give way thus. I have made many inquiries about this affair, and they all tend to exculpate you. This fellow, François, is the *mauvaise tête* of the regiment, and I only wish his chastisement had come from some other hand than yours.”

“Will he live, general?” asked I, with a smothering fulness in my throat, as I uttered the words.

“Not if he be mortal, I believe: the sword pierced his chest from side to side.”

I groaned heavily as I heard these words; and burying my head beneath the clothes, became absorbed in my grief. What would I not have endured then of insult and contumely, rather than suffer as I did the terrible load upon my conscience, of a fellow-creature’s blood — shed in passion and revenge. How willingly would I have accepted the most despised position among men, to be void of this crime.

"It matters not," cried I in my despair — "it matters not how I guide my path, misfortunes beset me at every turn of the way —"

"Speak not thus," said the general sternly. "The career you have embarked in, is a stormy and a rough one. Other men have fared worse than you have in it — and without repining too. You knew of one such yourself, who in all the saddest bereavements of his hopes, cherished a soldier's heart and a soldier's courage."

The allusion to my poor friend, Charles de Meudon, brought the tears to my eyes, and I felt that all my sufferings were little, compared with his.

"Let your first care be to get well as soon as you can: happily your name may escape the Emperor's notice in this affair, by appearing in the list of wounded — our friend the *Maître d'armes* is not likely to discover on you. The campaign is begun, however, and you must try to have your share of it. The Emperor's staff starts for Munich to-morrow. I must accompany them — but I leave you in good hands here; and this detachment will occupy Elchingen at least ten days longer."

Scarcely had the general left me when Mademoiselle re-entered the room.

"So, Monsieur," said she, smiling archly, "you have been left in my care, it seems. *Morbleu!* it 's well the Vivandière of the regiment is not a prude, or I should scarcely know how to act. Well, well, one can only do their best. And now, shall I read for you, or shall I leave you quiet for an hour or two?"

"Just so, leave him alone for a little while," said a gruff voice from the end of the bed, at the same time

that the huge beard and red moustache of Pioche appeared peeping above the curtain.

"Is he not stupid, that great animal of a cuirassier," said Mademoiselle, starting at the voice so unexpectedly heard. "I say, *mon Caporal*, right face — march. Do you hear, Sir? You've got the *feuille de route*. What do you stay for?"

"Ah, Mademoiselle," said the poor fellow, as he smoothed down his hair on his forehead, and looked the very impersonation of sheepish admiration.

"Well," replied she, as if not understanding his appeal to her feelings — "well."

A look of total embarrassment — an expression of complete bewilderment was his only reply; while his eyes wandered round the room till they met mine, and then as if suddenly conscious that a third party was present, he blushed deeply, and said —

"Too true, *mon Lieutenant*, she does with me what she will."

"Don't believe him, Monsieur," interposed she quickly. "I told him to get knocked on the head a dozen times, and he's never done so."

"I would though, and right soon too, if you were only in earnest," said he, with a vehemence that bespoke the truth of the assertion.

"There, there," said she, with a smile, as she held out her hand to him, "we are friends."

The poor fellow pressed it to his lips with the respectful devotion of a Bayard; and with a muttered "This evening," left the room.

"It is no small triumph, Mademoiselle," said I, "that you have inspired such a passion in the hardy breast of the cuirassier."

A saucy shake of the head, as though she did not like the compliment, was the only reply. She bent her head down over her work, and seemed absorbed in its details: while I, reverting to my own cares, became silent also.

“And so, Monsieur,” said she, after a long pause—“and so, you deem this conquest of mine a very wonderful thing.”

“You mistake me,” said I, eagerly—“you mistake me much. My surprise was rather that one like Pioche, good-hearted, simple fellow as he is, should possess the refinement of feeling —”

“A clever flank movement of yours, Lieutenant,” interposed she, with a pleasant laugh; “and I’ll not attack you again. And, after all, I *am* a little proud of my conquest.”

“The confession is a flattering one, from one who doubtless has had a great many to boast of.”

“A great many, indeed!” replied she *naïvely*.—“So many that I can’t reckon them—not to boast of, however, as you term it. *Parbleu*, some of them had little of *that*—But here comes the doctor, and I must not let him see us talking. *Ma foi*, they little think when their backs are turned, how seldom we mind their directions.”

The surgeon’s visit was a matter of a few seconds; he contented himself with feeling my pulse and reiterating his advice as to quiet.

“You have got the best nurse in the army, Monsieur,” said he, as he took his leave; “I have only one caution to give you — take care, if an affection of the heart, be not a worse affair than a thrust of a small sword. I have known such a termination of an illness before now.”

Mademoiselle made no reply, save an arch look of half anger, and left the room; and I, wearied and exhausted, sank into a heavy slumber.

CHAPTER XV.

The "Vivandière of the fourth."

FOR three entire weeks my wound confined me to the limits of my chamber; and yet, were it not for my impatience to be up and stirring, my life was not devoid of its happiness.

Every movement of the army, in its most minute detail, was daily reported to me by Mademoiselle Minette. The bulletins of the Emperor, the promotions, the "on dits" of the bivouack and the march, brought by the various battalions, as they moved on towards the east, were all related by her, with such knowledge of military phrase and soldiers' style, as to amuse me, equally by her manner, as by what she told.

The cuirassiers marched soon after I received my wound, and though attached to the corps, she remained behind at Elchingen, having pledged herself, as she said, to the general, to restore me safe and sound before she left me. The little window beside my bed offered a widely extended view over the great plain beneath, and there I have sat the entire day, watching the columns of cavalry and infantry, as they poured along, seemingly without ceasing, towards the Lower Danube. Sometimes the faint sounds of the soldiers' songs would reach me — the rude chorus of a regiment timing their step to some warrior's chaunt — and set my heart a beating to be with them once more. Sometimes my eye would rest upon the slow train of wag-gons surmounted with a white flag, that wound their

way heavily in the rear, and my spirit sunk as I thought over the poor wounded fellows that were thus borne onward with the tide of war, as the crushed serpent trails his wounded folds behind him.

Mademoiselle seldom left me. Seated at her work, often for hours without speaking, she would follow the train of her own thoughts, and when by chance she gave a passing glance through the window at the scene beneath, some single word would escape her, as to the regiments or their officers, few of which were unknown to her, at least by reputation.

I could not but mark that within the last twelve or fourteen days she seemed more sad and depressed than before — the lively gaiety of her character had given place to a meek and suffering melancholy, which I could not help attributing to the circumstances in which she was placed, away from all her ordinary pursuits, and the companions of her daily life. I hinted as much one day, and was about to insist on her leaving me — when she suddenly interrupted me, saying — “It is all true. I am sad; and know not why — for I never felt happier; yet, if you wished me to be gay, as I used to be, I could not for the world. It is not because I am far from those I have learned to look on as my brothers. Not so — my changeful fortune has often placed me thus. Perhaps it’s your fault, *mon Lieutenant*,” said she, suddenly turning her eyes full upon me.

“Mine, Minette! Mine!” said I, in amazement.

She blushed deeply, and held down her head, while her bosom heaved several times convulsively; and then, while a deathly paleness spread over her cheek, she said, in a low broken voice: —

“Perhaps it is because I am an orphan, and never

knew what it was to have those, whose dispositions I should imitate, and whose tastes I should study; but somehow I feel even as though I could not help becoming like those I am near to, following them — ay, and outstripping them — in all their likings and dislikings.”

“And so, as you seem sad and sorrowful, it is more than probable that you took the colour of *my* thoughts. I should feel sorry, Minette, to think it were thus — I should ill repay all your kindness to me — I must try and wear a happier countenance.”

“Do so — and mine will soon reflect it,” said she, laughing; “but, perhaps you have cause for sorrow,” added she, as she stole a glance at me beneath her eyelashes.

“You know, Minette! that I am an orphan like yourself,” said I, half evading the question.

“Ah!” cried she passionately, “if I had been a man, I should like to be such a one as Murat there. See how his black eyes sparkle, and his proud lip curls, when the roll of artillery, or the clattering of a platoon is heard — how his whole soul is in the fight. I remember once — it was at the Iser — his brigade was stationed beneath the hill, and had no orders to move forward for several hours — he used to get off his horse, and walk about, and, endeavour, by pushing the smoke away thus with his hand, and almost kneeling to the ground, to catch a view of the battle, and then he would spring into the saddle, and for sheer passion dash the spurs into his horse’s flanks, till he reared and plunged again. I watched him thus for hours. I loved to look on him, chafing and fretting, like his own mettled charger, he was so handsome!

“‘A drink, Minette! Something to cool my lips, for heaven’s sake,’ said he at last, as he saw me standing near him. I filled the little cup you see here with wine, and handed it to him. Scarcely had he raised it to his lips, when an aid-de-camp galloped up, and whispered some words in haste.

“‘Ha, ha!’ cried he, with a shout of joy — ‘they want us, then — the squadrons will advance by sections — and charge! — charge!’ — and with that he flung the goblet from him to the ground, and when I took it up, I found that with the grasp of his strong fingers he had crushed it nearly together. See here. I never would let it be changed. It is just as at the time he clasped it, and I keep it as a *souvenir* of the prince.” She took from a little shelf the cup, as she spoke, and held it up before me, with the devoted admiration with which some worshipper would regard a holy relic. “And that,” said Minette, as she pressed to her lips a faded cockade, whose time-worn tints still showed the tri-colored emblems of the republic — “that do I value above the cross of the Legion itself.”

“Whose was it, Minette? Some brave soldier’s, I’m sure.”

“And you may be sure, that was the cockade of Le Premier Grenadier de la France — La Tour d’Auvergne. The cousin of your own general.” Seeing that I had not heard before of him, she paused for a few seconds in amazement, and then muttered — “A brave school to train the youth of France it must be, where the name of La Tour d’Auvergne was never mentioned.”

Having thus vented her indignation, she proceeded to tell me of her hero, who, though descended from

one of the most distinguished families of France, yet persisted in carrying his musket in the ranks of the republican army — never attaining to a higher grade, nor known by any other title than the “Premier Grenadier de la France” — foremost in every post of danger — the volunteer at every emergency of more than ordinary peril — he refused every proffer of advancement, and lived among his comrades the simple life of a soldier.

“He fell at Neubourg,” said Mademoiselle, “scarce a day’s march from here; they buried him on the field, and placed him dead, as he had been ever while living, with his face towards the enemy. And you never heard of him — *bon Ciel!* it is almost incredible. You never brigaded with the forty-fifth of the line — that’s certain.”

“And why so?”

“Because they call his name at every parade muster, as though he were still alive and well. The first man called is La Tour d’Auvergne, and the first soldier answers, ‘*mort sur le champ de bataille.*’ That’s a prouder monument than your statues and tomb-stones. Is it not?”

“Indeed is it,” said I, to whom the anecdote was then new, though I afterwards lived to hear it corroborated in every respect. With many such traits of the service did Mademoiselle beguile the time — now telling of the pleasant life of the cantonment — now of the wild scenes of the battle-field. Young as she was, she had seen much of both, and learned around the bivouack fires, the old traditions of the revolutionary armies, and the brave deeds of the first veterans of France. In such narratives, too, her own enthusiastic nature burst forth in all its vehemence — her eyes

would sparkle, and her words come rapidly, as she described some fierce attack, or headlong charge—and it was impossible to listen without catching up a portion of her ardour, so wrapt up did she herself become in the excitement of her story. Thus, one evening, while describing the passage of the Adige, after detailing most circumstantially the position and strength of the attacking columns, and describing how each successive advance was repulsed by the murderous fire of the artillery, she proceeded to relate the plan of a flank movement, effected by some light infantry regiments, thrown across the river a considerable distance up the stream. “We came along,” said she, “under the shade of some willows, and at last reached the ford—the leading companies halted, two officers sounded the river, and found that it was passable. I was close by at the time—it was the colonel Lajolais who commanded the brigade, and he asked me for a ‘*goutte*.’ ‘It may be the last you’ll ever give me, Minette,’ said he, ‘I don’t expect to see you again.’”

“‘Are you going to remain at this side, colonel?’ said I.

“‘No, *parbleu*,’ said he, ‘not when the twenty-second cross to the other.’”

“‘Neither am I, then,’ said I, ‘my place is with the head of the battalion.’ Well, well, they all pressed me to stay back—they said a thousand kind things too—but that only decided me the more to go on—and as the signal-rocket was fired, the word was given, and on we went. For the first eight or ten paces, it was mere wading—but suddenly a grenadier in the front called out, ‘*Gare*, lift your muskets, it’s deep here;’ and so it was—with one plunge down I went,

but they seized me by the arms, and carried me along — and some way or other we reached the bank. *Morbleu!* I felt half-drowned — but there was little time to think over these things, for scarcely had the column formed, when the cry of ‘cavalry’ was given, and down came the lancers with a swoop, but we were all ready. The flank companies fell back, and formed in square, and a tremendous volley sent them off faster than they came. ‘Now, then, push forward double quick’ — said the old colonel — ‘the *pas de charge*.’ Alas! the poor little drummer was lying dead at his feet. The thought suddenly seized me, I sprang forward, unstrung his drum, threw the strap over my shoulder, and beat the ‘*pas de charge*’ — a cheer ran along the whole battalion, and on we went. *Mort de ciel!* I was never so near the fire before. There was the enemy, scarce two hundred yards off — two great columns, with artillery between, waiting for us. ‘Keep her back — keep back, Minette — *brave fille*.’ I heard no more — a shot came whizzing past, and struck me here.” She pulled down her dress, as she spoke, and disclosed the scar of a bullet’s track on her white shoulder — then, as if suddenly recollecting, she blushed deeply, drew her kerchief closely around her, and muttered in a low voice, “*Ma foi* — how these things make one forget to be a woman.” And with that she hung down her head, and despite all I could say would not utter another word.

Such was the “Vivandière” of the fourth — blending in her character the woman’s weakness, and the soldier’s ardour — the delicacy of feeling which not even the life of camps and bivouacks could eradicate, with the wild enthusiasm for glory — the passion of her

nation. It needed not her dark eyes, shaded with their long black fringe — her oval face, whose freckles but displayed the transparent skin beneath — her graceful figure, and her elastic step, to make her an object of attraction in the regiment — nor could I be surprised to learn as I did, how many a high offer of marriage had been made to her, by those soldiers of fortune, whose gallantry and daring had won them rank and honours in the service.

To value at their real price such attractions, one should meet them far away, and remote from the ordinary habits of the world, in the wild, reckless career of the camp — on the long march — beside the weary watch-fire — ay, on the very field of battle — amid the din, the clamour, and the smoke — the cheers, the cries of carnage: then, indeed, such an apparition had something magical in it. To see that tender girl tripping along fearlessly from rank to rank, as though she had a charmed life — now saluting with her hand some brave soldier, as he rode by to the charge — now stooping beside the wounded, and holding to his bloodless lips the longed-for cup: to watch her as she rode gracefully at the head of the regiment, or lay beside the fire of the bivouack, relating with a woman's grace some story of the campaign — while the grey-bearded veteran and the raw youth, hung on each word, and wondered how the scenes in which they mingled and acted, could bear such interest, when told by rosy lips. Who would wonder, if she had many lovers? who would not rather be surprised at those who remained coldly indifferent to such charms as hers?

Let my confession, then, excite neither astonishment nor suspicion — when I acknowledge that, in such

companionship, the days slipped rapidly over. I never wearied of hearing her tell of the scenes she had witnessed — nor did she of recounting them; and although a sense of reproach used now and then to cross me, for the life of inactivity and indolence I was leading, Mademoiselle Minette promised me many a brave opportunity of distinction to come — and campaigns of as great glory as even those of Italy and Egypt.

CHAPTER XVI.

The sick leave.

“WHAT is it, Minette?” said I, for the third time, as I saw her lean her head from out the narrow casement, and look down into the valley beside the river — “what do you see there?”

“I see a regiment of infantry coming along the road from Ulm,” said she, after a pause, “and now I perceive the lancers are following them, and the artillery too. Ah! and farther again, I see a great cloud of dust. *Mère de Ciel!* how tired and weary they all look! It surely cannot be a march in retreat; and now that I think of it, they have no baggage, nor any waggons with them.”

“That was a bugle call, Minette! Did you not hear it?”

“Yes — it’s a halt for a few minutes. Poor fellows, they are sadly exhausted; they cannot even reach the side of the way, but are lying down on the very road. I can bear it no longer. I must find out what it all means.” So saying, she threw a mantle which, Spanish fashion, she wore round her head, over her, and hurried from the room.

For some time I waited patiently for her return; but when half an hour elapsed, I arose and crept to the window. A succession of rocky precipices descended from the terrace on which the house stood, down to the very edge of the Danube, and from the point where I sat, the view extended for miles in every direction. What then was my astonishment, to see the wide plain, not marked by regular columns in marching array, but covered with straggling detachments, hurrying onward as if without order or discipline. Here, was an infantry battalion mixed up with a cavalry corps — the foot soldiers endeavouring to keep up with the ambling trot of the dragoons; there, the ammunition waggons were covered with weary soldiers, too tired to march. Most of the men were without their firelocks, which were piled in a confused heap on the limbers of the guns. No merry chant — no burst of warlike music cheered them on. They seemed like the scattered fragments of a routed army hurrying onward in search of some place of refuge — sad and spiritless.

“Can he have been beaten?” was the fearful thought that flashed across me, as I gazed. “Have the bold legions that were never vanquished succumbed at last! Oh, no! no! — I’ll not believe it;” and while a glow of fever warmed my whole blood, I buckled on my sabre, and taking my shako, prepared to issue forth. Scarcely had I reached the door, with tottering limbs, when I saw Minette dashing up the steep street at the top speed of her pony, while she flourished above her head a great placard, and waved it to and fro.

“The news! the news!” cried I, bursting with anxiety. “Are they advancing; or is it a retreat?”

“Read that!” said she, throwing me a large sheet

of paper, headed with the words, "PROCLAMATION À LA GRANDE ARMÉE," in huge letters. "Read that! for I 've no breath left to tell you."

"SOLDIERS — The campaign so gloriously begun will soon be completed. One victory, and the Austrian empire, so great but a week since, will be humbled in the dust. Hasten on, then: forced marches, by day and night, will attest your eagerness to meet the enemy; and let the endeavour of each regiment be to arrive soonest on the field of battle."

"Minette! — dearest Minette!" said I, as I threw my arms around her neck, "this is, indeed, good news."

"Gently, gently, Monsieur!" said she, smiling, while she disengaged herself from my sudden embrace. "Very good news, without doubt: but I don't think that there is any mention in the bulletin about embracing the vivandières of the army."

"At a moment like this, Minette! —"

"The best thing to do is, to make up one's baggage, and join the march," said she, very steadily, proceeding at the same time to put her plan into execution. While I gave her all assistance in my power, the doctor entered to inform us, that all the wounded who were then not sufficiently restored to return to duty, were to be conveyed to Munich, where general military hospitals had been established, and that he himself had received orders to repair thither, with his sick detachment, in which my name was enrolled.

"You 'll keep your old friend, François, company, Lieutenant Burke — he is able to move at last."

“François!” said I, in ecstasy; “and will he, indeed, recover?”

“I have little doubt of it; though certainly he’s not likely to practise as *Maître d’armes* again. You’ve spoiled his ‘*tierce*’ — though not before it cost the army some of the prettiest fellows I ever saw; but as to yourself —”

“As for me; I’ll march with the army. I feel perfectly recovered; my arm —”

“Oh! as for Monsieur’s arms,” said Mademoiselle, “I’ll answer for it, they are quite at his majesty’s service.”

“Indeed!” said the doctor, knowingly. “I thought it would come to that. Well, well! Mademoiselle, don’t look saucy. Let us part good friends, for once in our lives.”

“I hate being reconciled to a surgeon,” said she, pettishly.

“Why so, I pray?”

“Oh! you know, when one quarrels with an officer, the poor fellow may be killed before one sees him again, and it’s always a sad thought, that — but your doctor, nothing ever happens to him; you’re sure to see him, with his white apron, and his horrid weapons, a hundred times after, and one is always sorry for having forgiven such a cruel wretch.”

“Come, come! Mademoiselle! you bear us all an ill-will for the fault of one, and that’s not fair. It was the hospital aid of the sixth, Monsieur, a handsome fellow, too, who did not fall in love with her after her wound. A slight scratch.”

“A slight scratch, do you call it?” said I, indignantly,

as I perceived the poor girl's eyes fill at the raillery of her tormentor.

"Ah! Monsieur has seen it, then," said he maliciously. "A thousand pardons. I have the honour to wish you both adieu;" and with that, and a smile of most impertinent meaning, he took his leave.

"How silly to be vexed for so little, Minette," said I, approaching and endeavouring to console her.

"Well! but to call my wound a scratch," said she. "Was it not too bad, and I the only vivandière of the army that ever felt a bullet," and with that she turned away her head, but I could see as she wiped her eyes, that she cared less for the sarcasm on her wounded shoulder than the insult to her wounded heart. Poor girl, she looked sick and pale the whole day after.

We learned in the course of the day that some cavalry detachments would pass early on the morrow, thus allowing us sufficient time to provide ourselves with horses, and make our other arrangements for the march. These we succeeded in doing to our satisfaction: I being fortunate enough to secure the charger of an Austrian prisoner; Mademoiselle being already admirably mounted with her palfrey. Occupied with these details the day passed rapidly over, and the hour for supper drew near without my feeling how the time slipped past. At last the welcome meal made its appearance, and with it Mademoiselle herself. I could not help remarking that her toilette displayed a more than common attention: her neat Parisian cap — her collar, with its deep Valenciennes lace, and her *tablier*, so coquettishly embroidered, were all signs of an unusual degree of care, and though she was pale and in low spirits, I never saw her look so pretty.

All my efforts to make her converse were, however, in vain. Some secret weight lay heavily on her spirits, and not even the stirring topics of the coming campaign could awaken one spark of her enthusiasm. She evaded, too, every allusion to the following day's march, or answered my questions about it with evident constraint. Tired at last with endeavouring to overcome her silent mood, I affected an air of chagrin, thinking to pique her by it; but she merely remarked, that I appeared weary, and that as I had a long journey before me, it were as well I should retire early.

The marked coolness of her manner at this moment, struck me so forcibly, that I began really to feel some portion of the ill temper I affected, and with the crossness of an over-petted child, I arose to withdraw at once.

"Good-by, Monsieur — good-night, I mean," said she, blushing slightly.

"Good-night, Mademoiselle," said I, taking her hand coldly as I spoke. "I trust I may find you in better spirits to-morrow."

"Good-night — adieu," said she, hastily; and before I could add a word, she was gone.

"She is a strange girl," thought I, as I found myself alone, and tortured my mind to think whether anything I could have dropped had offended her. But no; we had parted a few hours before the best friends in the world: nothing had then occurred to which I could attribute this sudden change. I had often remarked the variable character of her disposition; the flashes of gaiety, mingled with outbursts of sorrow — the playful moods of fancy, alternating with moments of deep melancholy; and, after all, this might be one of them.

With these thoughts I threw myself on my bed, but could not sleep. At one minute my brain went on puzzling about Minette, and her sorrow; at the next, I reproached myself for my own harsh, unfeeling manner to the poor girl, and was actually on the eve of arising to seek her, and ask her pardon. At last sleep came, and dreams too; but, strange enough, they were of the distant land of my boyhood, and the hours of my youth — of the old house in which I was born, and its well-remembered rooms. I thought I was standing before my father, while he scolded me for some youthful transgression; I heard his words as though they were really spoken, as he told me that I should be an outcast and a wanderer, without a friend, a house, or home; that while others reaped wealth and honours, I was destined to be a castaway: and in the torrent of my grief I awoke.

It was night — dark, silent night; a few stars were shining in the sky, but the earth was wrapped in shadow; and as I opened my window, to let the fresh breeze calm my fevered forehead, the deep precipice beneath me seemed a vast gulph of yawning blackness. At a great distance off, I could see the watch-fires of some soldiers bivouacking in the plain; and even that much comforted my saddened heart, as it aroused me to the thoughts of the campaign before me. But again my thoughts recurred to my dream, which I could not help feeling as a sort of prediction.

When our sleep leaves its strong track in our waking moments, we dread to sleep again, for fear the whole vision should come back; and thus I sat down beside the window, and fell into a long train of thought. The images of my dream were uppermost in my mind,

and every little incident of childhood, long lost to memory, came now fresh before me — the sorrows of my school-boy years, unrelieved by the sense of love awaiting me at home; the clinging to all who seemed to feel or care for me, and the heart-sickening sorrow when I found that what I mistook for affection was merely pity; all save one — my mother. Her mild, sad looks, so seldom cheered by a ray of pleasure, I remember well how they fell on me! with such a thrilling sensation at my heart, and such a gush of thankfulness as I have felt then. Oh! if they who live with children knew how needful it is to open their hearts to all the little sorrows and woes of infant life; to teach confidence, and to feed hope; to train up the creeping tendrils of young desire, and not to suffer them to lie straggling and tangled on the earth — what a happier destiny would fall to the lot of many whose misfortunes in life date from the crushed spirit of childhood.

My mother! — I thought of her, as she would bend over me at night, her last kiss pressed on my brow — the healing balm of some sorrow, for which my sobs were still breaking; her pale, worn cheek; her white dress; her hand so bloodless and transparent, the very emblem of her malady — the tears started to my eyes, and rolled heavily along my cheek, my chest heaved, and my heart beat, till I could hear it. At this moment a slight rustle stirred the leaves. I listened, for the night was calm and still; not a breeze moved. Again I heard it close beside the window, on the little terrace which ran along the building, and occupied the narrow space beside the edge of the rock. Before I could imagine what it meant, a figure in white glided

from the shade of the trees, and approached the window. So excited was my mind, so wrought up my imagination by the circumstances of my dream, and the thoughts that followed, that I cried out in a voice of ecstasy — “My mother!” Suddenly the apparition stood still, and then as rapidly retreated, and was lost to view in the dark foliage. Maddened with intense excitement, I sprang from the window, and leaped out on the terrace. I called aloud — I ran about wildly, unmindful of the fearful precipice that yawned beside me. I searched every bush, I crept beneath each tree, but nothing could I detect. The cold perspiration poured down my face, my limbs trembled with a strange dread of I knew not what; I felt as if madness was creeping over me, and I struggled with the thought, and tried to calm my troubled brain. Wearied and faint, I gave up the pursuit at last, and throwing myself on my bed, I sank exhausted into the heavy slumber which only tired nature knows.

“The sous-Lieutenant Burke,” said a gruff voice, awakening me suddenly from my sleep, while by the light of a lantern he held in his hand I recognised the figure of an orderly sergeant, in full equipment.

“Yes — what then?” said I, in some amazement at the summons.

“This is the order of march, Sir, for the invalid detachment, under your command.”

“How so — I have no orders?”

“They are here, Sir.”

So saying, he presented me with a letter from the assistant adjutant of the corps, with instructions for the conduct of forty men, invalided, from different regiments, and now on their way to Lintz. The paper

was perfectly regular, setting forth the names of the soldiers, and their several corps, together with the daily marches, the halts, and distances. My only surprise was how this service so suddenly devolved on me, whose recovery could only have been reported a few hours before.

"When shall I muster the detachment, Sir," said the sergeant, interrupting me in the midst of my speculations.

"Now — at once. It is past five o'clock. I see Langenau is mentioned as the first halting-place; we can reach it by eight."

The moment the sergeant withdrew, I arose and dressed for the road, anxious to inform Mademoiselle as early as possible of this sudden order of march. When I entered the salon, I found to my surprise that the breakfast-table was all laid and every thing ready. What can this mean, said I; has she heard it already? At the same instant I caught sight of the door of her chamber lying wide open. I approached and looked in; the room was empty: the various trunks and boxes, the little relics of military glory I remembered to have seen with her, were all gone. Minette had departed. When or whither, I knew not! I hurried through the building, from room to room, without meeting any one. The door was open, and I passed out into the dark street, where all was still and silent as the grave. I hastened to the stable; my horse, ready equipped and saddled, was feeding, but the stall beside him was empty — the pony of the vivandière was gone. While many a thought flashed on my brain as to her fate, I tortured my mind to remember each circumstance of our last meeting — every word and every look; and as

I called to my memory the pettish anger of my manner towards her, I grew sick at heart, and hated myself for my own cold ingratitude. All her little acts of kindness, her tender care, her unwearying good-nature, were before me. I thought of her as I had seen her often in the silence of the night, when waking from some sleep of pain, she sat beside my bed, her hand pressed on my heated forehead; her low, clear voice was in my ear; her soft, mild look, beaming with hope and tender pity. Poor Minette, had I then offended you — was such the return I made for all your kindness?

“The men are ready, Sir,” said the sergeant, entering at the moment.

“She is gone,” said I, following out my own sad train of thought, and pointing to the vacant stall where her pony used to stand.

“Mademoiselle Minette —”

“Yes, what of her — where is she?”

“Marched with the cuirassier brigade that passed here last night at twelve o’clock. She seemed very ill, Sir, and the officer made her sit on one of the waggons.”

“Which road did they take?”

“They crossed the river, and moved away towards the forest. I think I heard the troop sergeant say something about Salzbouurg and the Tyrol.”

I made no answer, but stood mute and stupified; when I was again recalled to thought by his asking, if my baggage were ready for the waggons.

With a sullen apathy I pointed out my trunks in silence, and throwing one last look on the room, the scene of my former suffering, and of much pleasure

too, I mounted my horse, and gave the word to move forward.

As we passed from the gate, I stopped to question the *sous-officier* as to the route of the cuirassier division; but he could only repeat what the sergeant had already told me; adding there were several men slightly wounded in the squadrons, for they had been engaged twice within the week. The gates closed, and we were on the high road.

CHAPTER XVII.

Lintz.

As day was breaking, we came up with a strong detachment of the cavalry of the guard, proceeding to join Bessières' division at Lintz; from them we learned that the main body of the army were already far in advance, several entire corps having marched from Lintz, with the supposed intention of occupying Vienna. Ney's division it was said was also bearing down from the Tyrol; Davoust and Mortier were advancing by the left bank of the Danube, whilst Lannes and Murat, with an overwhelming force of light troops, had pushed forward two days' march in advance on their way to the capital. The fate of Ulm was already predicted for the Austrian city, and each day's intelligence seemed to make it only the more inevitable. Meanwhile, the Emperor Francis had abandoned the capital, and retreated on Brunn, a fortified town in Moravia, there to await the arrival of his ally, Alexander, hourly expected from Berlin.

As day after day we pressed forward, our numbers continued to increase: a motley force, indeed, did we present — cavalry of every sort, from the steel-clad

cuirassier to the gay hussar, dragoons, chasseurs, guides, and light cavalry, all mixed up together, and all eagerly recounting the several experiences of the campaign, as it fell under their eyes in different quarters. From none, however, could I learn any tidings of Minette; for though known to many there, the detachment she had joined had taken a southerly direction, and was not crossed by any of the others on their march. The General D'Auvergne, I heard, was with the headquarters of the Emperor, then established at the monastery of MÖlk, on the Danube.

On the evening of the 13th November we arrived at Linz, the capital of Upper Austria — but at the time I speak of, one vast barrack: thirty-eight thousand troops of all arms were within its walls — not subject to the rigid discipline and regular command of a garrison town, but bivouacking in the open streets and squares; tables were spread in the thoroughfares, at which the divisions, as they arrived, took their places, and after refreshing themselves, moved on to make way for others. The great churches were strewn with forage, and filled with the horses of the cavalry: there, might be seen the lumbering steeds of the cuirassier, eating their corn from the richly-carved box of a confessional; here, lay the travel-stained figure of a dragoon, stretched asleep across the steps of the altar; the little chapelries, where the foot of the penitent awoke no echo as it passed, now rung with the coarse jest and reckless ribaldry of the soldier; parties caroused in the little sacristies; and the rude chorus of a drinking song now vibrated through the groined roof, where only the sacred notes of the organ had been heard to peal. The Hôtel de Ville was the quartier-général, where the

generals of divisions were assembled, and from which the orderlies rode forth at every moment with despatches. The one cry — “forward” — was heard every where. They who before had claimed leave for slight wounds or illness, were now seen among their comrades, with bandaged arms and patched faces, eager to press on. Many whose regiments were in advance became incorporated for the time with other corps, and dismounted dragoons were often to be met with, marching with the infantry and mounting guard in turn. Every thing bespoke haste. The regiments which arrived at night, frequently moved off before day broke. The cavalry often were provided with fresh horses to press forward, leaving their own for the corps that were to follow. A great flotilla, provided with all the necessaries for an army on the march, moved along the Danube, and accompanied the troops each day; in a word, every expedient was practised which could hasten the movement of the army, justifying the remark so often repeated among the soldiers at the time — “*Le petit Caporal* makes more use of our legs than our bayonets in this campaign.”

On the same evening we arrived, came the news of the surprise of Vienna by Murat. Never was there such joy as this announcement spread through the army. The act itself was one of those daring feats which only such as he could venture on, and, indeed, at first seemed so miraculous, that many refused to credit it. Prince Auersperg, to whom the great bridge of the Danube was intrusted, had prepared every thing for its destruction in the event of attack. The whole line of wood-work was laid with combustibles; trains were set, the matches burning; a strong battery of twelve guns,

posted to command the bridge, occupied the height on the right bank, and the Austrian gunners lay, match in hand, beside their pieces: but a word was needed, and the whole work was in a blaze. Such was the state of matters when Sebastiani pushed through the Faubourg of the Leopoldstadt at the head of a strong cavalry detachment, supported by some grenadiers of the guard, and, by Murat's orders, concealed his force among the narrow streets which lead to the bridge from the left bank of the Danube.

This done, Lannes and Murat advanced carelessly along the bridge, which, from the frequent passage of couriers between the two head-quarters, had become a species of promenade, where the officers of either side met to converse on the fortunes of the campaign: dressed simply as officers of the staff, they strolled along till they came actually beneath the Austrian battery, and then entered into conversation with the Austrian officers, assuring them that the armistice was signed, and already peace proclaimed between the two countries. The Austrians, trusting to their story, and much interested by what they heard, descended from the mound, and, joining them, proceeded to walk backwards and forwards along the bridge, conversing on the probable consequences of the treaty, when suddenly turning round by chance, as they walked towards the right bank, they saw the head of a grenadier column approaching at the quick step.

The thought of treachery crossed their minds, and one of them rushing to the side of the bridge called out to the artillerymen to fire. A movement was seen in the battery, the matches were uplifted, when Murat dashing forward, cried aloud, "Reserve your fire, there

is nothing to fear." The same instant the Austrian officers were surrounded; the sappers rushing on the bridge cleared away the combustibles, and cut off the trains; and the cavalry, till now in concealment, pushing forward at a gallop, crossed the bridge, followed by the grenadiers in a run, before the Austrians, who saw their own officers mingled with the French, could decide on what was to be done; while Murat, springing on his horse, dashed onward at the head of the dragoons, and before five minutes elapsed the battery was stormed, the gunners captured, and Vienna won.

Never was there a *coup de main* more hardy than this — whether we look to the danger of the deed itself, or the insignificant force by which it was accomplished: a few horsemen, and some companies of foot, led on by a heroic chief, thus turned the whole fortune of Europe; for, by securing this bridge, Napoleon enabled himself, as circumstances might warrant, to unite the different corps of his army on the right or left banks of the Danube — and either direct his operations against the Russians, or the Austrians under the Archduke Charles, as he pleased.

The treachery by which the bold deed was made successful, was, alas! deemed no stain on the achievement. But one rule of judgment existed in the imperial army — was the advantage on the side of France, and to the honour of her arms — that covered every flaw, no matter whether inflicted by duplicity or breach of faith. The habit of healing all wounds of conscience by a bulletin had become so general, that men would not trust to the guidance of their own reason, till confirmed by some imperial proclamation: and when the Emperor declared a battle gained, and glory achieved,

who would gainsay him? If this blind, headlong confidence, tended to lower the *morale* of the nation, in an equal degree did it make them conquerors in the field: and thus, by a strange decree of Providence, would it seem, were they preparing for themselves the terrible reverse of fortune, which — when the destinies of their leader became clouded, and their confidence in him shaken — was to fall on a people, who lived only in the mad intoxication of victory, and knew not the sterner virtues, that can combat with defeat.

But so was it, Napoleon commanded the legions, and described their achievements: he led them to the charge, and he apportioned their glory: the heroism of the soldier had no existence, until acknowledged by the proclamation after the battle; the valour of the general wanted confirmation, till sealed by his approval. To fight beneath his eyes was the greatest glory a regiment could wish for — to win one word from him was fame itself for ever.

If I dwell on these thoughts here, it is because I now felt for the first time the sad deception I had practised on myself — and how little could I hope to realise in my soldier's life, the treasured aspirations of my boyhood. Was this, then, indeed the career I had pictured to my mind — the chivalrous path of honour — was this the bold assertion of freedom I so often dreamed of? How few of that armed host knew any thing of the causes of the war — how much fewer still cared for them. No sentiment of patriotism — no devotion to the interests of liberty or humanity — prompted us on. Yet these were the thoughts first led me to the career of arms: such ambitious promptings first made my heart glow with the enthusiasm of a soldier.

This gloomy disappointment made me low-spirited and sad; nor can I say where such reflections might not have led me, when suddenly a change came over my thoughts, by seeing a wounded soldier, who had just arrived from Mortier's division, with news of a fierce encounter they had sustained against Kutusof's Russians. The poor fellow was carried past in a litter — his arm had been amputated that same morning, and a frightful shot-wound had carried away part of his cheek; still, amid all his suffering, his eye was brilliant, and a smile of proud meaning was on his lips.

"Lift it up, Guillaume, let me see it again," said he, as they bore him along the crowded street.

"What is it he wishes?" said I. "The poor fellow is asking for something."

"Yes, *mon Lieutenant*. It is the *sabre d'honneur* the Emperor gave him this morning — he likes to look at it every now and then — he says he doesn't mind the pain, when he sees that before him — *and it's natural too.*"

"Such is glory," said I to myself; "and he who feels this in his heart, has no room for other thoughts."

"Oh, give to me the trumpet's blast,
And the champ of the charger prancing;
Or the whiz of the grape-shot flying past,
That's music meet for dancing,
Tralararala,"

sang a wild-looking voltigeur, as he capered along the street, keeping time to his rude song with the tramp of his feet.

"Ha! there goes a fellow from the Faubourg," said an officer near me.

"The Faubourg?" repeated I, asking for explanation.

"Yes, to be sure. The Faubourg St. Antoine supplies all the reckless devils of the army — one of them would corrupt a regiment; and so, the best thing to do is, to keep them as much together as possible. The voltigeurs have little else — and proof is, they are the cleverest corps in the service; and if they could be kept from picking and stealing, lying, drinking, and gambling — there 's not a man might not be a general of division in time. There goes another." As he spoke, a fellow passed by with a goose under his arm, followed by a woman most vociferously demanding restitution — while he only amused himself by replying with a mock courtesy — deploring in sad terms the unhappy necessities of war, and the cruel hardships of a campaign.

"It's no use punishing those fellows," said the officer: "they desert in whole companies, if you send one to the *salle de police*; and so, we have only one resource, which is, to throw them pretty much in advance, and leave their chastisement to the enemy: and sooth to say, they ask for nothing better themselves."

Thus, even these fellows seemed to have their own sentiment of glory — a problem which the more I reasoned over, the more puzzled did I become.

While a hundred conjectures were hourly in circulation, none, save those immediately about the person of Napoleon, could possibly divine the quarter where the great blow was to be struck — although all were in expectation of the orders to prepare for battle. News would reach us of marchings and counter-marchings — of smart skirmishes here, and prisoners taken there — yet could we not form the slightest conception of where the chief force of the enemy lay — nor what the direction to which our own army was pointed. Indeed, our

troops seemed to scatter on every side. Marmont, with a strong force, was despatched towards Grätz, where it was said the Archduke Charles was at the head of a considerable army. Davoust moved on Hungary, and occupied Presbourg. Bernadotte retraced his steps towards the Upper Danube, to hold the Archduke Frederick in check, who had escaped from Ulm with ten thousand men. Mortier's corps, harassed and broken by the engagement with Kutusof, were barely sufficient to garrison Vienna. While Soult, Lannes, and Murat pushed forward towards Moravia, with a strong cavalry force, and some battalions of the guard. In fact, the whole army was scattered like an exploded shell — nor could we see the means by which its wide-extended fragments were to be united at a moment — much less, divine the spot to which their combined force was to be directed.

Had these Russians been fabulous creatures of a legend, instead of men of mortal mould, they could scarcely have been endowed with more attributes of ubiquity than we conferred on them: sometimes we believed them at one side of the Danube — sometimes at the other: now, we heard of them as retreating by forced marches into their native fastnesses — now, as encamped in the mountain regions of Moravia. Yesterday, came the news that they laid down their arms, and surrendered as prisoners of war: to-day, we heard of them as having forced back our advanced posts, and carried off several squadrons prisoners. At length came the positive information, that the allied armies were in cantonments around Olmutz, while Napoleon had pushed forward to Brunn, a place of considerable strength, communicating by the high road with the Russian head-

quarters. It was no longer doubtful, then, where the great game was to be decided, and thither the various battalions were now directed, by marches day and night.

On the 29th of November, our united detachments, now numbering several hundred men, arrived at Brunn. I lost no time in repairing to the head-quarters, where I found General D'Auvergne deeply engaged with the details of the force under his command — his brigade had been placed under the orders of Murat — and it was well known, the prince gave little rest or respite to those in his command. From him I learned that three days of unsuccessful negotiation had just passed over, and that the Emperor had now resolved on a great battle. Indeed, every moment was critical. Russia had assumed a decidedly hostile aspect: the Swedes were moving to the south: the Archduke Charles, by a circuitous route, was on the march to join the Russian army, to whose aid fresh reinforcements were daily arriving: and Benningsen was hourly expected with more. Under these circumstances a battle was inevitable — and such a one as, by its result, must conclude the war.

This much did I learn from the old general as we rode over the field together, examining with caution the nature of the ground, and where it offered facilities, and where it presented obstacles, to the movements of cavalry. Such were the orders issued that morning by Napoleon to the generals of brigade, who might now be seen traversing the plain, with their staffs, in every direction. As we moved along we could discover in the distance the dark columns of the enemy, marching not towards us, but in a southerly direction

towards our extreme right. This movement attracted the attention of several others, and more than one aide-camp was dispatched to Brunn, to bring the intelligence to the Emperor.

The same evening couriers departed in every direction to Bernadotte and Davoust, to hasten forward at once; even Mortier, with his mangled division, was ordered to abandon Vienna to a division of Marmont's army, and move on to Brunn, and now the great work of concentration began. Meanwhile the Russians advanced, and on the 30th drove in an advanced post, and compelled our cavalry to fall back behind our position.

The following morning the allies resumed their flank movement, and now no doubt could be entertained of their plan, which was, by turning our right, to cut us off from our supporting columns resting at Vienna, and throw our retreat back upon the mountainous districts of Bohemia. In this way five massive columns moved past us scarce half a league distant from our advanced posts, numbering eighty thousand men, of which fifteen were cavalry in the most perfect condition.

Our position was in advance of the fortress of Brunn; the head-quarters of the Emperor occupied a rising piece of ground, at the base of which flowed a small stream, a tributary to some of the numerous ponds by which the field was intersected. The entire ground in our front was indeed a succession of these small lakes, with villages interspersed, and occasionally some stunted woods; great morasses extended around these ponds, through which the high roads led, or such by-paths as conducted from one village to another. Here and there

were plains where cavalry might act with safety, but rarely in large bodies.

Our right rested on the lake of Mœritz, where Soult's division was stationed, behind which, thrown back in such a manner as to escape the observation of the enemy, was Davoust's corps, the reserve occupying a cliff of ground beside the convent of Reygern. Our left, under Lannes, occupied the hill of Santon, a wooded eminence, the last of a long chain of mountains running east and west. Above and on the crest of the height a powerful park of artillery was posted, and defended by strong intrenchments. A powerful cavalry corps was placed at the bottom of the mountain; next came Bernadotte's division, separated by the high road from Brunn to Olmutz from the division under Murat, which, besides his own cavalry, contained Oudinot's grenadiers, and Bessières' battalions of the imperial guard; the centre and right being formed of Soult's division, the strongest of all; the reserve, consisting of several battalions of the guard and a strong force of artillery, being under the immediate orders of Napoleon, to be employed wherever circumstances demanded. These were the dispositions for the coming battle, made with all the precision of troops moving on parade; and such was the discipline of the army at Boulogne, and so perfectly arranged the plans of the Emperor, that the ground of every regiment was marked out, and each corps moved into its allotted space with the regularity of some piece of mechanism.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Austerlitz.

THE dispositions for the battle of Austerlitz occupied the entire day. From sunrise Napoleon was on horseback, visiting every position: he examined each battery with the skill of an old officer of artillery; and frequently dismounting from his horse, carefully noted the slightest peculiarities of the ground—remarking to his staff, with an accuracy which the event showed to be prophetic, the nature of the struggle, as the various circumstances of the field indicated them to his practised mind.

It was already late, when he turned his horse's head towards his bivouack-hut—a rude shelter of straw—and rode slowly through the midst of that great army. The *Ordre du Jour*, written at his own dictation, had just been distributed among the soldiers; and now around every watch-fire, the groups were kneeling to read the spirit-stirring lines by which he so well knew how to excite the enthusiasm of his followers. They were told “that the enemy were the same Russian battalions they had already beaten at Hollabrunn, and on whose flying traces they had been marching ever since.” “They will endeavour,” said the proclamation, “to turn our right; but, in doing so, they must open their flank to us—need I say what will be the result? Soldiers, so long as with your accustomed valour, you deal death and destruction in their ranks, so long shall I remain beyond the reach of fire; but let the victory prove, even for a moment, doubtful, your Emperor shall be in the midst of you. This day must decide for ever the honour of the infantry of France. Let no man leave his

ranks to succour the wounded — they shall be cared for, by one, who never forgot his soldiers; and with this victory the campaign is ended!”

Never were lines better calculated to stimulate the energy, and flatter the pride of those, to whom they were addressed. It was a novel thing in a general to communicate to his army the plan of his intended battle, and, perhaps, to any other than a French army, the disclosure would not have been rated as such a favour; but their warlike spirit and military intelligence have ever been most remarkably united, and the men were delighted with such a proof of confidence and esteem.

A dull roar, like the sound of the distant sea, swelled along the line from the far right, where the convent of Reygern stood, and, growing louder by degrees, proclaimed that the Emperor was coming.

It was already dark, but he was quickly recognized by the troops, and with one burst of enthusiasm they seized upon the straw of their bivouacks, and setting fire to it, held the blazing masses above their heads, waving them wildly to and fro, amid the cries of “Vive l’Empereur.” For above a league along the plain, the red light flashed and glowed, marking out beneath it, the dense squares and squadrons of armed warriors. It was the anniversary of Napoleon’s coronation, and such was the *fête* by which they celebrated the day.

The Emperor rode through the ranks uncovered. Never did a prouder smile light up his features, while, thronging around him, the veterans of the Guard struggled to catch even a passing glance at him. “Do but look at us to-morrow, and keep beyond the reach of shot,” said a “*grognard*,” stepping forward, “we’ll bring their cannon and their colours, and lay them at

thy feet." The marshals themselves, the hardened veterans of so many fights, could not restrain their enthusiasm; and proffers of devotion unto death accompanied him as he went.

At last, all was silent in the encampment; the soldiers slept beside their watch-fires, and, save the tramp of a patrol, or the "*qui vive*" of the sentinels, all was still. The night was cold and sharp — a cutting wind blew across the plain, which gave way to a thick mist — so thick, the sentries could scarcely see a dozen paces off.

I sat in my little hovel of straw — my mind far too much excited for sleep — watching the stars as they peeped out one by one, piercing the grey mist, until, at last, the air became thin and clear, and a frosty atmosphere succeeded to the weighty fog; and now, I could trace out the vast columns, as they lay, thickly strewn along the plain. The old general, wrapped in his cloak, slept soundly on his straw couch; his deep-drawn breathing showed that his rest was unbroken. How slowly did the time seem to creep along — I thought it must be nigh morning, and it was only a little more than midnight. Our position was a small rising ground about a mile in front of the left centre, and communicating with the enemy's line by a narrow road between the marshes. This had been defended by a battery of four guns, with a stockade in front; and along it now, for a considerable distance, a chain of sentinels were placed, who should communicate any movement that they observed in the Russian lines, of which I was charged to convey the earliest intelligence to the *Quartier-général*. This duty alone would have kept me in a state of anxiety, had not the frame of my

mind already so disposed me; and I could not avoid creeping out, from time to time, to peer through the gloom, in the direction of the enemy's camp, and listen with an eager ear for any sounds from that quarter. At last, I heard the sound of a voice at some distance off—then, a few minutes after, the hurried step of feet, and a voltigeur came up, breathless with haste—

“The Russians were in motion towards the right. Our advanced post could hear the roll of guns and tumbrils moving along the plain, and it was evident their columns were in march.”

I knelt down and placed my ear to the ground, and almost started at the distinctness with which I could hear the dull sound of the large guns as they were dragged along;—the earth seemed to tremble beneath them.

I awoke the General at once, who, resting on his arm, coolly heard my report, and having directed me to hasten to head-quarters with the news, lay back again, and was asleep before I was in my saddle. At the top speed of my horse, I galloped to the rear, winding my way between the battalions, till I came to a gentle rising ground, where, by the light of several large fires, that blazed in a circle, I could see the dismounted troopers of the *Chasseurs à cheval*, who always formed the imperial body-guard. Having given the word, I was desired by the officer of the watch to dismount, and, following him, I passed forward to a space in the middle of the circle, where, under shelter of some sheafs of straw piled over each other, sat three officers, smoking beside a fire.

“Ha! here comes news of some sort,” said a voice I knew at once to be Murat's. “Well, Sir, what is 't?”

"The Russian columns are in motion, Monsieur le Maréchal — the artillery moving rapidly towards our right."

"*Diantre!* it's not much more than midnight. Davoust, shall we awake the Emperor?"

"No, no," said a harsh voice, as a shrivelled, hard-featured man turned round from the blaze, and showing a head covered by a coarse woollen cap, looked far more like a pirate, than a marshal of France — "they'll not attack before day breaks. Go back," said he, addressing me, "observe the position well, and if there be any general movement towards the southward, you may report it."

By the time I regained my post, all was in silence once more — either the Russians had arrested their march, or already their columns were out of hearing — not a gleam of light could I perceive along their entire position, and now, worn out with watching, I threw myself down among the straw, and slept soundly.

"There — there! — that's the third," said General D'Auvergne, shaking me by the shoulder, "there again — don't you hear the guns?"

I listened, and could just distinguish the faint booming sound of far-off artillery, coming up from the extreme right of our position. It was still but three o'clock, and, although the sky was thick with stars, perfectly dark in the valley. Meanwhile, we could hear the galloping of cavalry, quite distinctly, in the same direction.

"Mount, Burke, and back to the *Quartier-général* — but you need not, here come some of the staff."

"So, D'Auvergne," cried a voice whose tones were strange to me, "they meditate a night-attack it would seem — or is it only trying the range of their guns?"

"I think the latter, Monsieur le Maréchal; for I heard no small arms, and, even now, all is quiet again."

"I believe you are right," said he, moving slowly forward, while a number of officers followed at a little distance. "You see, D'Auvergne, how correctly the Emperor judged their intentions. The brunt of the battle will be about Reygern. But there — don't you hear bugles in the valley?"

As he spoke, the music of our tirailleurs' bugles arose from the glen in front of our centre, where, in a thick beech wood, the light infantry regiments were posted.

"What is it, D'Esterre?" said he to an officer who galloped up at the moment.

"They say the Russian guard, Sir, is moving to the front: our skirmishers have orders to fall back without firing."

As he heard this, the Marshal Bernadotte — for it was he — turned his horse suddenly round, and rode back, followed by his staff. And now the drums beat to quarters along the line, and the hoarse trumpets of the cavalry might be heard summoning the squadrons throughout the field; while between the squares, and in the intervals of the battalions, single horsemen galloped past with orders. Soult's division, which extended for nearly a league to our right, was the first to move, and it seemed like one vast shadow creeping along the earth, as column beside column marched steadily onward. Our brigade had not as yet received orders, but the men were in readiness beside the horses, and only waiting for the word to mount.

The suspense of the moment was fearful — all that I had ever dreamed or pictured to myself, of a soldier's

enthusiasm, was faint and weak, compared to the rush of sensations I now experienced. There must be a magic power of ecstasy in the approach of danger — some secret sense of bounding delight, mingled with the chances of a battle — that render one intoxicated with excitement. Each booming gun I heard, sent a wild throb through me, and I panted for the word, “forward.”

Column after column moved past us, and disappeared in the dip of ground beneath; and as we saw the close battalions filling the wide plain in front, we sighed to think that it was destined to be the day of glory, peculiarly to the infantry. Wherever the nature of the field permitted shelter, or the woods afforded cover, our troops were sent immediately to occupy. The great manœuvre of the day was to be the piercing of the enemy's centre, whenever he should weaken that point, by the endeavour to turn our right flank.

A faint streak of grey light was marking the horizon, when the single guns which we had heard at intervals, ceased, and then, after a short pause, a long, loud roll of artillery issued from the distant right, followed by the crackling din of small arms, which increased at every moment, and now swelled into an uninterrupted noise, through which the large guns pealed from time to time. A red glare, obscured now and then, by means of black smoke, lit up the sky in that quarter, where already the battle was raging fiercely.

The narrow causeway between the two small lakes in our front, conducted to an open space of ground, about a cannon-shot from the Russian line, and this, we were now ordered to occupy, to be prepared to act as support to the infantry of Soult's left, whenever the attack

began. As we debouched into the plain, I beheld a group of horsemen, who, wrapped up in their cloaks, sat motionless in their saddles, calmly regarding the squadrons as they issued from the wood: these were Murat and his staff, to whom was committed the attack on the Russian guard. His division consisted of the hussars and chasseurs under Kellermann, the cuirassiers of D'Auvergne, and the heavy dragoons of Nansouty, making a force of eight thousand sabres, supported by twenty pieces of field artillery. Again were we ordered to dismount, for although the battle continued to rage on the right, the whole of the centre and left were unengaged.

Thus stood we as the sun arose — that “Sun of Austerlitz” so often appealed to, and apostrophized by Napoleon, as gilding the greatest of his glories. The mist from the lakes, shut out the prospect of the enemy’s lines at first, but gradually this moved away, and we could perceive the dark columns of the Russians, as they moved rapidly along the side of the Pratzen, and continued to pour their thousands towards Reygern.

At last the roar of the musketry swelled louder and nearer, and an officer galloping past, told us that Soult’s right had been called up to support Davoust’s division. This did not look well: it proved the Russians had pressed our lines closely, and we waited impatiently to hear further intelligence. It was evident, too, that our right was suffering severely, otherwise the attack on the centre would not have been delayed. Just then, a wild cheer to the front drew our attention thither, and we saw the heads of three immense columns, Soult’s division, advancing at a run towards the enemy.

“Par St. Louis,” cried the General D'Auvergne, as

he directed his telescope on the Russian line, "those fellows have lost their senses; see if they have not moved their artillery away from the Pratzen, and weakened their centre more and more. Soult sees it — mark how he presses his columns on. There they go, faster and faster; but look, there's a movement yonder — the Russians perceive their mistake."

"Mount!" was now heard from squadron to squadron: while dashing along the line like a thunderbolt, Murat rode far in advance of his staff — the men cheering him as he went.

"There!" cried D'Auvergne, as he pointed with his finger, "that column with the yellow shoulder-knots — that's Vandamme's brigade of light infantry; — see how they rush on, eager to be first up with the enemy, but St. Hilaire's grenadiers have got the start of them, and are already at the foot of the hill — it is a race between them."

And so had it become — the two columns advanced, cheering wildly, while the officers, waving their caps, led them on, and others rode along the flanks urging the men forward. The order now came for our squadrons to form in charging sections, leaving spaces for the light artillery between; this done, we moved slowly forward at a walk — the guns keeping, step by step, beside us. A few minutes after, we lost sight of the attacking columns, but the crashing fire told us they were engaged, and that already the great struggle had begun. For above an hour we remained thus: every stir, every word loud spoken, seeming to our impatience like the order to move. At last, the squadrons to our right were seen to advance, and then a tremulous motion of the whole line showed that the horses themselves

participated in the eagerness of the moment; and, at last, the word came for the cuirassiers to move up. In less than a hundred yards we were halted again, and I heard an aid-de-camp telling General D'Auvergne that Davoust had suffered immensely on the right — that his division, although reinforced, had fallen back behind Reygern — and all now depended on the attack of Soult's columns. I heard no more — for now the whole line advanced in trot, and as our formation showed an unbroken front, the word came — “faster” and “faster.” As we merged from the low ground, we saw Soult's column already half-way up the ascent; — they seemed like a great wedge driven into the enemy's centre, which opening as they advanced, presented two surfaces of fire to their attack.

“The battery yonder has opened its fire on our line,” said D'Auvergne — “we cannot remain where we are.”

“Forward!” “charge!” came the word from front to rear, and squadron after squadron dashed madly up the ascent. The one word only “charge” kept ringing through my head — all else was drowned in the terrible din of the advance. An Austrian brigade of light cavalry issued forth as we came up, but soon fell back under the overwhelming pressure of our force, and now we came down upon the squares of the red-brown Russian infantry. Volley after volley, sent back our leading squadrons wounded and repulsed, when, unlimbering with the speed of lightning, the horse artillery poured in a discharge of grape-shot. The ranks wavered, and through their cleft spaces of dead and dying, our cuirassiers dashed in, sabring all before them. In vain the infantry tried to form again: succes-

sive discharges of grape, followed by cavalry attacks, broke through their firmest ranks, and at last retreating, they fell back under cover of a tremendous battery of field-guns, which, opening their fire, compelled us to retire into the wood. Nor were we long inactive. Bernadotte's division was now engaged on our left, and a pressing demand came for cavalry to support them. Again we mounted the hill, and came in sight of the Russian guard, led on by the Grand-duke Constantine himself, — a splendid body of men, conspicuous for their size, and the splendour of their equipment. Such, however, was the impetuous torrent of our attack, that they were broken in an instant, and, notwithstanding their courage and devotion, fresh masses of our dragoons kept pouring down upon them, and they were sabred, almost to a man. While we were thus engaged, the battle became general from left to right, and the earth shook beneath the thundering sounds of two hundred great guns. Our position, for a moment victorious, soon changed, for having followed the retreating squadrons too far, the waves closed behind us, and we now saw that a dense cloud of Austrian and Russian cavalry were forming in our rear. An instant of hesitation would have been fatal. It was then that a tall and splendidly dressed horseman broke from the line, and with a cry to "follow," rode straight at the enemy. It was Murat himself, sabre in hand, who clearing his way through the Russians, opened a path for us: a few minutes after, we had gained the wood, but one-third of our force had fallen.

"Cavalry!" — "cavalry!" cried a field officer, riding down at headlong speed, his face covered with blood from a sabre-cut — "to the front."

The order was given to advance at a gallop, and we found ourselves next instant, hand to hand with the Russian dragoons, who having swept along the flank of Bernadotte's division, were sabring them on all sides. On we went, reinforced by Nansouty and his carabiniers, a body of nigh seven thousand men. It was a torrent no force could stem — the tide of victory was with us, and we swept along, wave after wave, the infantry advancing in line, for miles at either side, while whole brigades of artillery kept up a murderous fire without ceasing. Entire columns of the enemy surrendered as prisoners — guns were captured at each instant, and only by a miracle did the Grand-duke escape our hussars, who followed him, till he was lost to view, in the flying ranks of the allies. As we gained the crest of the hill, we were in time to see Soult's victorious columns driving the enemy before them, while the imperial guard, up to that moment unengaged, reinforced the grenadiers on the right, and broke through the Russians on every side.

The attempt to outflank us on the right, we had perfectly retorted on the left, where Lannes' division, overlapping the line, pressed them on two sides, and drove them back, still fighting, into the plain, which, with a lake, separated the allied armies from the village of Austerlitz; and here took place the most dreadful occurrence of the day. The two roads which led through the lake, were soon so encumbered and blocked up, by ammunition waggons and carts, that they became impassable; and as the masses of the fugitives thickened, they spread over the lake, which happened to be frozen.

It was at this time that the Emperor came up, and seeing the cavalry halted, and no longer in pursuit of

the flying columns, ordered up twelve pieces of the artillery of the Imperial Guard, which, from the crest of the hill, opened a murderous fire on them. The slaughter was fearful, as the discharges of grape and round shot, cut channels through the jammed-up mass, and tore the dense columns, as it were, into fragments. Dreadful as the scene was, what followed far exceeded it in horror; for soon the shells began to explode beneath the ice, which now, with a succession of reports louder than thunder, gave way. In an instant, whole regiments were engulfed, and amid the wildest cries of despair, thousands sank, never to appear again, while the deafening artillery mercilessly played upon them, till over that broad surface no living thing was seen to move, while beneath, was the sepulchre of five thousand men. About seven thousand reached Austerlitz by another road to the northward; but even these had not escaped, save for a mistake of Bernadotte, who most unaccountably, as it was said, halted his division on the heights. Had it not been for this, not a soldier of the Russian right wing had been saved.

The reserve cavalry and the dragoons of the "Guard," were now called up from the pursuit, and I saw my own regiment pass close by me, as I stood amid the staff, round Murat. The men were fresh, and eager for the fray; yet how many fell in that pursuit, even after a victory. The Russian batteries continued their fire to the last. The cannoners were cut down beside their guns, and the cavalry made repeated charges on our advancing squadrons; nor was it till late in the day they fell back, leaving two-thirds of their force dead or wounded on the field of battle.

On every side now, were to be seen the flying co-

lums of the allies, hotly followed by the victorious French. The guns still thundered at intervals; but the loud roar of battle was subdued to the crashing din of charging squadrons, and the distant cries of the vanquishers and the vanquished. Around, and about, lay the wounded, in all the fearful attitudes of suffering; and as we were fully a league in advance of our original position, no succour had yet arrived for the poor fellows whose courage had carried them into the very squares of the enemy.

Most of the staff — myself among the number — were despatched to the rear for assistance. I remember, as I rode along at my fastest speed, between the columns of infantry and the fragments of artillery, which covered the ground, that a *peloton* of dragoons came thundering past, while a voice shouted out "*Place, Place;*" supposing it was the Emperor himself, I drew up to one side, and uncovering my head, sat in patience till he had passed, when, with the speed of four horses urged to their utmost, a calèche flew by, two men dressed like couriers seated on the box: they made for the high-road towards Vienna, and soon disappeared in the distance.

"What can it mean?" said I, to an officer beside me — "not his Majesty, surely?"

"No, no," replied he, smiling; "it is General Lebrun on his way to Paris, with the news of the victory. The Emperor is down at Reygern yonder, where he has just written the bulletin. I warrant you, he follows that calèche with his eye; he 'd rather see a battery of guns carried off by the enemy, than an axle break there this moment."

Thus closed the great day of Austerlitz — a hundred cannons, forty-three thousand prisoners, and thirty-two colours, being the spoils of this — the greatest of even Napoleon's victories.

CHAPTER XIX.

The field at midnight.

WE passed the night on the field of battle — a night dark and starless: the heavens were, indeed, clothed with black, and a heavy atmosphere, louring and gloomy, spread like a pall over the dead and the dying! Not a breath of air moved; and the groans of the wounded sighed through the stillness, with a melancholy cadence no words can convey! Far away in the distance, the moving lights marked where fatigue-parties went in search of their comrades. The Emperor himself did not leave the saddle till nigh morning; he went, followed by an ambulance, hither and thither over the plain, recalling the names of the several regiments, enumerating their deeds of prowess, and even asking for many of the soldiers by name. He ordered large fires to be lighted throughout the field, and where medical assistance could not be procured, the officers of the staff might be seen covering the wounded with great-coats and cloaks, and rendering them such aid, as lay in their power. Dreadful as the picture was — fearful reverse to the gorgeous splendour of that vast army the morning sun had shone upon, in all the pride of strength and spirit — yet even here was there much to make one feel, that war is not bereft of its humanizing influences. How many a soldier did I see that night, blackened with powder — his clothes torn and ragged with shot, sitting beside a wounded

comrade, now wetting his lips with a cool draught — now cheering his heart with words of comfort. Many, themselves wounded, were tending others, less able to assist themselves. Acts of kindness and self-devotion — not less in number than those of heroism and courage — were met with at every step; while among the sufferers, there lived a spirit of enthusiasm, that seemed to lighten the worst pangs of their agony. Many would cry out, as I passed, to know the fate of the day, and what became of this regiment, or of that battalion. Others could but articulate a faint "*Vive l'Empereur*," which in the intervals of pain they kept repeating, as though it were a charm against suffering; while one question met me every instant — "What says *le petit Caporal*? is he content with us?" None were insensible to the glorious issue of that day; nor amid all the agony of death, dealt out in every shape of horror and misery, did I hear one word of anger or rebuke to him, for whose ambition they had shed their hearts' blood.

Having secured a fresh horse, I rode forward in the direction of Austerlitz, where our cavalry, met by the chevaliers of the Russian Imperial Guard, sustained the greatest check, and the most considerable loss of the day. The old dragoon who accompanied me, warned me I should find few, if any, of our comrades living there. "*Ventre bleu!* Lieutenant! you can't expect it: the first four squadrons went down like one man; for when our fellows fell wounded from their horses, they always sabred or shot them as they lay."

I found his information but too correct. Lines of dead men lay beside their horses, ranged as they stood in battle, while before them lay the bodies of the Rus-

sian Guard, their gorgeous uniform all slashed with gold, marking them out, amid the dull russet costumes of their comrades. In many places were they intermingled, and showed where a hand-to-hand combat had been fought; and I saw two, clasped rigidly in each other's grasp, who had evidently been shot by others, while struggling for the mastery.

"I told you, *mon* Lieutenant, it was useless to come here; this was '*à la mort*' while it lasted; and, if it had continued much longer, in the same fashion, it's hard to say which of us had been going over the field now with lanterns."

Too true, indeed. Not one wounded man did we meet with, nor did one human voice break the silence around us. "Perhaps," said I, "they may have already carried up the wounded to the village yonder. I see a great blaze of light there: ride forward, and learn if it be so."

When I had dismissed the orderly, I dismounted from my horse, and walked carefully along the ridge of ground, anxious to ascertain if any poor fellow still remained alive, amid that dreadful heap of dead. A low brushwood covered the ground in certain places, and here I perceived but few of the cavalry had penetrated, while the infantry were all *tirailleurs* of the Russian Guard, bayoneted by our advancing columns. As I approached the lake, the ground became more rugged and uneven, and I was about to turn back, when my eye caught the faint glimmering of a light reflected in the water. Picqueting my horse where he stood, I advanced alone towards the light, which I saw now was at the foot of a little rocky crag beside the lake. As I drew near, I stopped to listen, and could

distinctly hear the deep tones of a man's voice, as if broken at intervals by pain, while in his accents I thought I could trace a tone of indignant passion, rather than of bodily suffering.

"Leave me, leave me where I am," cried he peevishly, "I thought I might have had my last few moments tranquil, when I staggered thus far."

"Come, come, comrade," said another in a voice of comforting — "come, thou wert never faint-hearted before. Thou hast had thy share of bruises, and cared little about them too. Art dry?"

"Yes, give me another drink. Ah!" cried he in an excited tone, "they can't stand before the 'Cuirassiers of the Guard.' *Sacre bleu!* how proud '*le petit Caporal*' will be of this day." Then, dropping his voice, he muttered, — "What, care I, who 's proud. I have my billet and must be going."

"Not so, *mon enfant*; thou'lt have the cross for thy day's work; he knows you well; I saw him smile to-day, when thou mad'st the salute in passing."

"Didst thou that?" said the wounded man with eagerness; "did he smile? Ah, villain! how you can allure men to shed their hearts'-blood by a smile. He knows me! That he ought, and if he but knew how I lay here now, he'd send the best surgeon of his staff to look after me."

"That he would, and that he will; courage and cheer up."

"No, no; I don't care for it now; I'll never go back to the regiment again — I couldn't do it!"

As he spoke the last words, his voice became fainter and fainter, and, at last, was lost in a hiccup

— partly, as it seemed, from emotion, and partly from bodily suffering.

“*Qui vive?*” cried his companion, as the clash of my sabre announced my approach.

“An officer of the eighth hussars,” said I in a low voice, fearing to disturb the wounded man as he lay with his head sunk on his knees.

“Too late, comrade, too late,” said he in a stifled tone; “the order of route has come — I must away.”

“A brave cuirassier of the guard should never say so while he has a chance left to serve his Emperor in another field of battle.”

“*Vive l'Empereur, vive l'Empereur!*” shouted he madly, as he lifted his helmet and tried to wave it above his head; but the exertion brought on a violent fit of coughing which choked his utterance, while a torrent of red blood gushed from his mouth, and deluged his neck and chest.

“Ah, *mon Dieu*, that cry has been his death,” said the other, wringing his hands in utter misery.

“Where is he wounded?” said I, kneeling down beside the sick man, who now lay, half on his face, upon the grass.

“In the chest, through the lung,” whispered the other “he doesn’t know the doctor saw him; it was he told me; there was no hope. ‘You may leave him,’ said he, ‘an hour or two more are all that’s left him’ — as if I could leave a comrade we all loved. My poor fellow, it is a sad day for the old fourth when thou are taken from them.”

“Ha, was he of the fourth, then?” said I, remembering the regiment.

“Yes, *parbleu!* and though but a corporal, he was well known throughout the army — Pioche —”

“Pioche,” cried I in agony, “is this Pioche?”

“Here,” said the wounded man, hearing the name, and answering as if on parade, “here, *mon Commandant*, but too faint, I’m afraid, for duty; I feel weak to-day,” said he, as he pressed his hand upon his side, and then slowly sank back against the rock, and dropped his arms at either side.

“Come,” said I, “we must lose no time; let us carry him to the rear. If nothing else can be done he’ll meet with care —”

“Hush! *mon Lieutenant*, don’t let him hear you speak of that; he stormed and swore so much when the ‘ambulance’ passed, and they wanted to bring him along, that it brought on a coughing fit, just like what you saw, and he lay in a faint for half an hour after; he vows he’ll never stir from where he is — truth is, *Commandant*,” said he in the lowest whisper, “he is determined to die; when his squadron fell back from the Russian square, he rode on their bayonets, and cut at the men while the artillery was playing all about him. He told me this morning he’d never leave the field.”

“Poor fellow, what was the meaning of this sad resolution?”

“*Ma foi!* a mere trifle after all,” said the other, shrugging his shoulders, and making a true French grimace of contempt; “you’ll smile when I’ll tell you; but he takes it to heart, poor fellow. His mistress has been false to him; no great matter that, you’d say; but so it is, and nothing more; see, how still he lies now; is he sleeping?”

"I fear not, he looks exhausted from loss of blood; come, we must have him out of this; here comes my orderly to assist us; if we carry him to the road, I'll find a carriage of some sort."

I said this in a tone of command, to silence any scruples he might still have about obeying his comrade, in preference to the orders of an officer. He obeyed with the instinct of discipline, and proceeded to fold his cloak, in such a manner that we could carry the wounded man between us.

The poor corporal, too weak to resist us, faint from bleeding, and semi-stupid, suffered himself to be lifted upon the cloak, and never uttered a word or a cry, as we bore him along between us.

We had not proceeded far when we came up with a convoy conducting several carts with the wounded to the convent of Reygern, which now had been fitted up as an hospital. On one of these we secured a place for our poor friend, and walked along beside him towards the convent. As we went along, I questioned his comrade closely on the point, and he told me, that Pioche had resolved never to survive the battle, and had taken leave of his friends the evening before. "Ah, *parbleu!*" added he with energy, "Mademoiselle is pretty enough; there's no denying that, but her head is turned by flattery and soft speeches; all the gay young fellows of the hussar regiment, the aid-de-camps — ay, and some of the Generals too — have paid her so much attention, that it could not be expected she'd care for a poor corporal — not but that Pioche is a brave fellow and a fine soldier — *sacristi!* he'd be no discredit to any girl's choice; but Minette —"

"Minette, the Vivandière —"

"Ay, to be sure, *mon* Lieutenant — I'd warrant you must have known her?"

"What of her — where is she?" said I, burning with impatience.

"She 's with the wounded, up at Reygern yonder. They sent for her to Heilbrunn yesterday where she was with the reserve battalions. *Ma foi!* you don't think our fellows would do without Minette, at the "ambulance," where there was a battle to be fought. They say, they'd hard work enough to make her come up, after all — she 's a strange girl — that she is."

"How was that? has she taken offence with the fourth?"

"No, that is not it; she likes the old regiment in her heart. I'd never believe she didn't, but —" Here he dropped his voice to a low whisper, as if dreading to be overheard by the wounded man — "but they say — who knows if it 's true — that when she was left behind at Ulm or Elchingen, or somewhere up there on the Danube, that there was a young fellow — I heard his name, too, but I forget it — who was brought in, badly wounded, and that Mademoiselle was left to watch and nurse him; he got well in time, for the thing was not so serious as they thought; and, what do you think was the return he made the poor girl — he seduced her!"

"It's false, false as hell!" cried I, bursting with passion; "who has dared to spread such a calumny?"

"Don't be angry, *mon* Lieutenant; there are plenty to answer for the report; and if it was yourself —"

"Yes; it was by *my* bed-side she watched; it was to *me* she gave that care and kindness by which I re-

covered from a dangerous wound; but so far from this base requital —”

“Why did she leave you, then, and march night and day with the chasseur brigade into the Tyrol? — why did she tell her friends, that she’d never see the old fourth again? — why did she fret herself into an illness —”

“Did she do this? poor girl.”

“Ay, that she did; but, mayhap, you never heard of all this. I can only say, *mon* Lieutenant, that you’d be safer in a broken square, charged by a heavy squadron, than among the fourth, after what you’ve done.”

I turned indignantly from him without a reply, for while my pride revolted at answering an accusation from such a quarter, my mind was harassed by the sad fate of poor Minette, and perplexed how to account for her sudden departure. My silence, at once arrested my companion’s speech, and we walked along the remainder of the way, without a word on either side.

The day was just breaking when the first waggon of the convoy entered the gates of the convent. It was an enormous mass of building, originally destined for the reception of about three thousand persons, for, in addition to the priestly inhabitants, there were two great hospitals, and several schools, included within the walls. This, before the battle, had been tenanted by the staffs of many general officers, and the corps of engineers and sappers, but now was entirely devoted to the wounded of either army, for Austrians and Russians were everywhere to be met with, receiving equal care and attention, with our own troops.

It was the first time I had witnessed a military hospital after a battle, and the impression was too fearful to be ever forgotten by me.

The great chambers, and spacious rooms of the convent, were soon found inadequate for the numbers who arrived; and already the long corridors and passages of the building, were crowded with beds, between which a narrow path scarcely permitted one person to pass. Here, promiscuously, without regard to rank, officers in command of regiments, lay side by side with the meanest privates, waiting the turn of medical aid; as no other order was observed than the necessities of each case demanded. A black mark above the bed, indicating that the patient's state was hopeless, proclaimed that no further attention need be bestowed; while the same mark, with a white bar across it, implied that it was a case for operation. In this way, the surgeons who arrived at each moment from different corps of the army, discovered, at a glance, where their services were required, and not a minute's time was lost.

The dreadful operations of surgery, for which, in the events of every day life, every provision of delicate secrecy, and every minute detail which can alleviate dread, are so rigidly studied, were here going forward on every side — the horrible preparations moved from bed to bed, with a rapidity which showed that where suffering so abounded, there was no time for sympathy; and the surgeons, with arms bared to the shoulder, and bedaubed with blood, toiled away, as though life no longer moved in the creeping flesh beneath the knife, and human agony spoke not aloud, with every motion of their hand.

"Place there — move forward," said an hospital-surgeon, as they carried up the litter on which Pioche lay stretched and senseless.

"What's this?" cried a surgeon, leaning forward, and placing his hand on the sick man's pulse. "Ah! — take him back again — it's all over there."

"Oh, no!" cried I in agony, "it can scarcely be — they lifted him alive from the waggon."

"He's not dead, Sir," replied the surgeon in a whisper, "but he will soon be — there's internal bleeding going on from that wound, and a few hours, or less, perhaps, must close the scene."

"Can nothing be done — nothing?"

"I fear not." He opened the jacket of the wounded man as he spoke, and slitting the inner clothes asunder with a quick stroke of his scissors, disclosed a tremendous sabre-wound in the side. "That is not the worst," said he; "look here," pointing to a small bluish mark of a bullet-hole, above it — "here lies the mischief."

An hospital-aid whispered something at the instant in the surgeon's ear, to which he quickly replied — "When?"

"This instant, Sir, the ligature slipped, and —"

"Remove him," was the reply. "Now, Sir, I have a bed for your poor fellow here; but I have little hope to give you: his pulse is stronger, otherwise the endeavour would be lost time."

While they carried the litter forward, I perceived that another party were lifting from a bed near, a figure, over whose face the sheet was carelessly thrown. I guessed from the gestures that the form they lifted was lifeless; the heavy sump of the body upon the ground, showed it beyond a doubt. The bearers replaced the

dead man, by the dying body of poor Pioche, and from a vague feeling of curiosity, I stooped down and drew back the sheet from the face of the corpse. As I did so, my limbs trembled, and I leaned back almost fainting against the wall. Pale with the palor of death, but scarcely altered from life, I beheld the dead features of Amedée Pichot, the captain, whose insolence had left an unsettled quarrel between us. The man, for whose coming I waited, to expiate an open insult, now lay cold and lifeless at my feet. What a rush of sensations passed through my mind as I gazed on that motionless mass; and oh, with what gratitude my heart gushed, to think that he did not fall by *my* hand!

"A brave soldier, but a quarrelsome friend," said the surgeon, stooping down to examine the wound, with all the indifference of a man who regarded life as a mere problem. "It was a cannon-shot carried it off."

As he said this, he disclosed the mangled remains of a limb, torn from the trunk, too high to permit of amputation. "Poor Amedée, it was the death he always wished for. It was a strange horror he had, of falling by the hand of an adversary, rather than being carried off, thus — and now for the cuirassier."

So saying, he turned towards the bed on which Pioche lay, still as death itself. A few minutes' careful investigation of the case, enabled him to pronounce that although the chances were many against recovery, yet it was not altogether hopeless.

"All will depend on the care of whoever watches him," said the surgeon. "Symptoms will arise, requiring prompt attention, and a change in treatment, and this is one of those cases where a nurse is worth

a hundred doctors. Who takes charge of this bed?" he called aloud.

"Minette, Monsieur," said a sergeant. "She has lain down to take a little rest, for she was quite worn out with fatigue."

"*Me voici!*" said a silvery voice I knew at once to be hers; and the same instant she pierced the crowd around the bed, and approached the patient. No sooner had she beheld the features of the sick man, than she reeled back, and grasped the arms of the persons on either side. For a few seconds she stood, with her hands pressed upon her face, and when she withdrew them, her features were almost ghastly in their hue, while with a great effort over her emotion, she said in a low voice — "Can he recover?"

"Yes, Minette," replied the surgeon, "and will, if care avail any thing. Just hear me for a moment."

With that he drew her to one side, and commenced to explain the treatment he proposed to adopt. As he spoke, her cloak, which up to this instant she wore, dropped from her shoulders, and she stood there in the dress of the Vivandière — a short frock coat, of light blue, with a thin gold braid upon the collar and the sleeve — loose trowsers of white jean, strapped beneath her boots. A silk sash of scarlet and gold entwined, was fastened round her waist, and fell in a long fringe at her side; while a cap of blue cloth, with a gold band and tassel, hung by a hook at her girdle. Simple as was the dress, it displayed to perfection the symmetry of her figure and her carriage, and suited the character of her air and gesture, which, abrupt and impatient at times, was almost boyish in the wayward freedom of her action.

The surgeon soon finished his directions, the crowd separated, and Minette alone remained by the sick man's bed. For some minutes her cares did not permit her to look up, but when she did, a slight cry broke from her, and she sank down upon the seat at the bedside.

"Minette, dear Minette, you are not angry with me," said I in a low and trembling tone; "I have not done aught to displease you — have I so?"

She answered not a word, but a blush of the deepest scarlet suffused her face and temples, and her bosom heaved almost convulsively.

"To you I owe my life," continued I with earnestness; "nay more, I owe the kindness which made of a sick bed a place of pleasant thoughts and happy memories. Can I then have offended you, while my whole heart was bursting with gratitude?"

A paleness — more striking than the blush that preceded it — now stole over her features, but she uttered not a word. Her eyes turned from me, and fell upon her own figure, and I saw the tears fill up and roll slowly along her cheeks.

"Why did you leave me, Minette," said I, wound up by her obstinate silence beyond further endurance — "Did the few words of impatience —"

"No — no — no," broke she in, "not that — not that."

"What then; tell me, for heaven's sake, how have I earned your displeasure: believe me, I have met with too little kindness in my way through life, not to feel poignantly the loss of a friend. What was it, I beseech you?"

"Oh, do not ask me!" cried she, with streaming

eyes — “do not, I beg of you; enough that you know, and this I swear to you, that no fault of yours was in question. You were always good and always kind to me — too kind — too good — but not even your teaching could alter the waywardness of my nature. Speak of this no more, I ask you, as the greatest favour you can bestow on me. See here,” cried she, while her lips trembled with emotion, “I have need of all my courage to be of use to him, and you will not, I am sure, render me unequal to my task.”

“But we are friends, Minette — friends as before,” said I, taking her hand, and pressing it within mine.

“Yes, friends,” muttered she in a broken voice, while she turned her head from me. “Adieu! Monsieur, adieu!”

“Adieu, then, since you wish it so, Minette; but whatever your secret reason for this change towards me, you never can alter the deep-rooted feeling of my heart, which makes me know myself your friend for ever.”

The more I thought of Minette's conduct, the more puzzled I was. No jealousy on the part of Pioche could explain her abrupt departure from Elchingen, and her resolve never to rejoin the fourth. She was indeed a strange girl, wayward and self-willed, but her impulses all had their source in high feelings of honour, and exalted pride. It might have been, that some chance expression had given her offence; yet she denied this — but still, her former frankness was gone, and a sense of coldness, if not distrust, had usurped its place. I could make nothing of it. One thing alone did I feel convinced of — she did not love Pioche. Poor fellow, with all the fine traits of his honest nature,

the manly simplicity and openness of his character, he had not those arts of pleasing, which win their way with a woman's mind; besides, that Minette, from habit and tone of thought, had imbibed feelings and ideas of a very different class in society, and, with a feminine tact, had contrived to form acquaintance with, and a relish for, the tastes and pleasures of the cultivated world. The total subversion of all social order, effected by the Revolution, had opened the path of ambition in life equally to women, as to men; and all the endeavours of the Consulate, and the Empire, had not sobered down the minds of France to their former condition. The sergeant, to-day, saw no reason why he might not wear his epaulettes, to-morrow, and in time exchange his shako even for a crown; and so the Vivandière, whose life was passed in the intoxicating atmosphere of glory, might well dream of greatness which should be hers, hereafter, and of the time, when, as the wife of a marshal or a peer of France, she would walk the salons of the Tuilleries, as proudly as the daughter of a Rohan or a Tavanne.

There was then nothing vain or presumptuous in the boldest flight of ambition. However glittering the goal, it was beyond the reach of none; and the hopes, which in better-ordered communities had been deemed absurd, seemed here but fair and reasonable; and from this element alone, proceeded some of the greatest actions, and by far the greatest portion of the unhappiness of the period. The mind of the nation was unfixed: men had not as yet resolved themselves into those grades and classes, by the means of which public opinion is brought to bear upon individuals, from those of his own condition. Each was a law unto himself, sug-

gesting his own means of advancement, and estimating his own powers of success; and the result was, a general scramble for rank, dignity, and honours, the unfitness of the possessor for which, when attained, brought neither contempt nor derision. The epaulette was noblesse — the shako, a coronet. What wonder, then, if she, whose personal attractions were so great, and whose manners and tone of thought were so much above her condition, had felt the stirrings of that ambition within her heart, which now appeared to be the moving spirit of the nation.

Lost in such thoughts, I turned homewards towards my quarters, and was already some distance from the convent, when a dragoon galloped up to my side, and asked, eagerly, if I were the surgeon of the sixth grenadiers. As I replied in the negative, he muttered something between his teeth, and added louder, "The poor General — it will be too late after all;" so saying, and before I could question him further, he set spurs to his horse, and dashing onwards, soon disappeared in the darkness of the night. A few minutes afterwards I beheld a number of lanterns straight before me, on the narrow road, and as I came nearer, a sentinel called out,

"Halt there; stand."

I gave my name and rank, when the man advancing towards me, said in a half whisper,

"It is our General, Sir — they say he cannot be brought any farther, and they must perform the operation here."

The soldier's voice trembled at every word, and he could scarcely falter out, in reply to my question, the name of the wounded officer.

"General St. Hilaire, Sir, who led the grenadiers on the Pratzen," said the poor fellow, his sorrow struggling with his pride.

I pressed forward, and there, on a litter, lay the figure of a large and singularly fine-looking man. His coat, which was covered with orders, lay open, and discovered a shirt, stained and clotted with blood; but his most dangerous wound was from a grape shot in the thigh, which shattered the bone, and necessitated amputation. A young staff surgeon, the only medical man present, was kneeling at his side, and occupied in compressing some wounded vessels to arrest the bleeding, which, at the slightest stir of the patient, broke out anew. The remainder of the group were grenadiers of his own regiment, in whose sad and sorrow-struck faces, one might read the affection his men invariably bore him.

"Is he coming? Can you hear any one coming?" said the young surgeon, in an anxious whisper to the soldier beside him.

"No, Sir, but he cannot be far off now," replied the man.

"Shall I ride back to Reygern for assistance?" said I, in a low voice, to the surgeon.

"I thank you, Sir," said the wounded man, in a low, calm tone — for with the quick ear of suffering he had overheard my question — "I thank you, but my orderly has already been sent thither. If you could relieve my young friend here from his fatiguing duty for a little, you would render us both a service — I am truly grieved to see him so much exhausted."

"No, no, Sir," stammered the youth, as the tears

ran fast down his cheeks, "this is my place, I will not leave it."

"Kind fellow," muttered the General, as he pressed his hand gently on the young man's arm, "I can bear this better than you can."

"Ah, here he comes now," said the sentinel, and the same moment a man dismounted from his horse, and came forward towards us. It was Louis, the surgeon of the Emperor himself, despatched by Napoleon the moment he heard of the event.

At any other moment, perhaps, the abrupt demeanour of this celebrated surgeon would have savoured little of delicacy or feeling, nor even then, could I forgive the sudden announcement in which he conveyed to the sufferer, that immediate amputation must be performed.

"No chance left but this, Louis?" said the General.

"None, Sir," replied the doctor, while he unlocked an instrument case, and busied himself in preparation for the operation.

"Can you defer it a little — an hour or two I mean?"

"An hour perhaps, not more certainly."

"But am I certain of your services, then, Louis?" said the General, trying to smile. "You know I always promised myself your aid, when this hour came."

"I shall return in an hour," replied the doctor, pulling out his watch, "I am going to Rapp's quarters."

"Poor Rapp; is he wounded?"

"A mere sabre cut; but Sebastiani has suffered more severely. Now, then, Lanusse," said he, addressing the young surgeon, "you remain here — continue as you are doing — and in an hour" —

"In an hour," echoed the wounded man, with a shudder, as though the anticipation of the dreadful event had thrilled through his very heart; nor was it till the retiring sounds of the surgeon's horse had died away in the distance, that his features recovered their former calm and tranquil expression.

"A prompt fellow is Louis," said he, after a pause, "and though one might like somewhat more courtesy in the Faubourg, yet on the field of battle it is all for the best — this is no place, nor time, for compliments."

The young man answered not a word, either not daring to criticise too harshly his superior; or, perhaps, his emotion at the moment was too strong for utterance. In reply to my offer to remain with him, however, he thanked me heartily, and seemed gratified that he was not to be left alone in such a trying emergency.

"Come," said St. Hilaire, after a pause, "I have asked for time, and am already forgetting how to employ it."

"Who can write here? can you, Guilbert?"

"Alas! no, Sir," said a dark grenadier, blushing to the very eyes.

"If you will permit a stranger, Sir," said I, "I will be but too proud and too happy to render you any assistance in my power. I am on the staff of General D'Auvergne, and —"

"A French officer, Sir," interrupted he; "quite enough; I ask for no other guerdon of your honour. Sit down here, then, and — but first try if you can discover a pocket-book in my sabertasch; I hope it has not been lost."

"Here it is, General," said a soldier, coming forward with it; "I found it on the ground beside you."

"Well, then, I will ask you to write down from my dictation, a few lines, which, should this affair —" he faltered slightly here; "this affair prove unfortunate, you will undertake to convey, by some means or other, to the address I shall give you in Paris. It is not a will, I assure you," continued he, with a faint smile; "I have no wealth to leave; but I know his majesty too well to fear any thing on that score; but my children, I wish to give some few directions —" Here he stopped for several minutes, and then, in a calm voice, added, "Whenever you are ready —"

It was with a suffering spirit, and a faltering hand, I wrote down from his dictation, some short sentences, addressed to each member of his family. Of these, it is not my intention to speak, save in one instance, where St. Hilaire himself evinced a wish that his sentiments, should not be a matter of secrecy.

"I desire," said he, in a firm tone of voice, as he turned round and addressed the soldiers on either side of him; "I desire that my son, now at the Polytechnique, should serve the Emperor better than, and as faithfully as his father has done; if his majesty will graciously permit him to do so, in the grenadier battalion, which I have long commanded; it will be the greatest favour I can ask of him —" A low murmur of grief, no longer repressible, ran through the little group around the litter. "The grenadiers of the sixth," continued he, proudly, while for an instant his pale features flushed up, "will not love him the less for the name he bears. Come, come, men — do not give way, thus; what will my kind young friend here say of us,

when he joins the hussar-brigade. This is not their ordinary mood, believe me," said he, addressing me; "the Russian Guard would give a very different account of them — they are stouter fellows at the '*pas de charge*,' than around the litter of a wounded comrade."

While he was yet speaking, Louis returned, followed by two officers, one of whom, notwithstanding his efforts at concealment, I recognised to be Marshal Murat.

"We must remove him, if it be possible," said the surgeon, in a whisper; "and yet the slightest motion is to be dreaded."

"May I speak to him?" said Murat, in a low voice.

"Yes, that you may," replied Louis, who now pushed his way forward and approached the litter.

"Ah, so soon!" said the wounded man, looking up; "a man of your word, Louis — and how is Rapp? nothing in this fashion, I hope," added he, pointing to his fractured limb with a sickly smile.

"No, no," replied the surgeon; "but here is Marshal Murat come to inquire after you, from the Emperor."

A flush of pride lit up St. Hilaire's features as he heard this; and he asked eagerly — "Where, where?"

"We must remove you, St. Hilaire," said Murat, endeavouring to speak calmly, when it was evident his feelings were highly excited; "Louis says you must not remain here."

"As you like, Marshal; what says his majesty? is the affair as decisive as he looked for?"

"Far more so: the allied army is destroyed — the campaign is ended."

"Come, then, this is not so bad as I deemed it,"

rejoined St. Hilaire, with a tone of almost gaiety; "I can afford to be invalided if the Emperor has no further occasion for me."

While these few words were interchanging, Louis had applied a tourniquet around the wounded limb, and having given the soldiers directions how they were to step, so as not to disturb or displace the shattered bones, he took his place beside the litter and said —

"We are ready now, General."

They lifted the litter as he spoke, and moved slowly forward. Murat pressed the hand St. Hilaire extended to him, without a word; and then, turning his head away, suffered the party to pass on.

Before we reached Reygern, the wounded general had fallen into a heavy sleep, from which he did not awake, as they laid him on the bed in the hospital.

"Good night, Sir, or, rather, good morning," said Louis to me, as I turned to leave the spot; "we may chance to have better news for you than we anticipated, when you visit us here again."

And so we parted.

CHAPTER XX.

A "Maitre d'armes."

THE day after the battle of Austerlitz, the Prince of Lichtenstein arrived in our camp, with, as it was rumoured, proposals for a peace. The negotiations, whatever they were, were strictly secret, not even the marshals themselves being admitted to Napoleon's confidence on this occasion. Soon after mid-day, a great body of the guard who had been in reserve the previous day, were drawn up in order of battle, presenting an array of several thousand men, whose dress, look, and

equipment — fresh as if on parade before the Tuilleries — could not fail to strike the Austrian envoy with amazement. Every thing that could indicate the appearance of suffering, or even fatigue, among the troops, was sedulously kept out of view. Such of the cavalry regiments as suffered least in the battle, were under arms, while the generals of division received orders to have their respective staffs fully equipped and mounted, as if on a day of review. It was late in the afternoon when the word was passed along the lines to stand to arms; and the moment after, a calèche, drawn by six horses, passed in full gallop, and took the road towards Austerlitz. The return of the Austrian envoy set a thousand conjectures in motion, and all were eager to find out what had been the result of his mission.

“We must soon learn it all,” said an old colonel of artillery near me; “if the game be war, we shall be called up to assist Davoust’s movement on Göding — the Russians have but one line of retreat, and that is already in our possession.”

“I cannot for the life of me understand the Emperor’s inaction,” said a younger officer — “here we remain just as if nothing had been done. One would suppose that a Russian army stood in full force before us, and that we had not gained a tremendous battle.”

“Depend on it, Auguste,” said the old officer, smiling, “his Majesty is not the man to let slip his golden opportunities. If we don’t advance, it is because it is safer to remain where we are.”

“Safer than pursue a flying enemy?”

“Even so — it is not Russia, nor Austria, we have in the field against us, but Europe — the world.”

“With all my heart,” retorted the other boldly;

“nor do I think the odds unfair — all I would ask is — the General Buonaparte of Cairo or Marengo, and not the purple-clad Emperor of the Tuilleries.”

“It is not while the plain is yet reeking with the blood of Austerlitz, that such a reproach should be spoken,” said I, indignantly; “never was Buonaparte greater than Napoleon.”

“Monsieur has served in Egypt,” said the young man contemptuously, while he measured me from head to foot.

“Would that I had! would that I could give whatever years I may have before me, for those whose every day shall live in history.”

“You are right, young man,” said the old colonel, “they were glorious times, and a worthy prelude to the greatness that followed them.”

“A bright promise of the future — never to come,” rejoined the younger, with a flash of anger on his cheek.

“*Parbleu*, Sir, you speak boldly,” said a harsh, low voice, from behind. We turned — it was Napoleon, dressed in a grey coat, all covered with fur, and looking like one of the couriers of the army. “I did not know my measures were so freely canvassed as I find them. Who are you, Sir?”

“Legrange, Sire, Chef d’escadron of the 2nd voltigeurs,” said the young man, trembling from head to foot, while he uncovered his head, and stood cap in hand before him.

“Since when, Sir, have I called you into my counsels, and asked your advice, or what is it in your position which entitles you to question one in mine? Duroc, come here — your sword, Sir.”

The young man let fall his shako from his hand, and laid it on his sword-hilt — “Ah!” cried the Emperor, suddenly — “what became of your right arm?”

“I left it at Aboukir, Sire.”

Napoleon muttered something between his teeth — then added aloud — “Come, Sir, you are not the first whose hand has saved his head; return to your duty, and — mark me! be satisfied with doing yours, and leave me to mine. And you, Sir,” said he, turning towards me and using the same harsh tone of voice, “I should know your face.”

“Lieutenant Burke of the 8th hussars.”

“Ah! I remember, — the Chouanist. So, Sir, it seems that I stand somewhat higher in your esteem than when you kept company with Messieurs Georges and Pichegru, eh?”

“No, Sire, — your majesty ever occupied the first place in my admiration and devotion.”

“Sacristi! then, you took a strange way to show it, when first I had the pleasure of your acquaintance. You are on General St. Hilaire’s staff?”

“General D’Auvergne’s, Sire.”

“True! D’Auvergne, a word with you:” — he turned and whispered something to the old General, who during the whole colloquy stood at his back, anxious, but not daring to interpose a word.

“Well, well,” said Napoleon in a voice of much kinder accent; — “I am satisfied, your General, Sir, reports favourably of your zeal and capacity. I do not desire to let your former conduct prove any bar to your advancement, and on his recommendation, of which I trust you may prove yourself worthy, I name you to a troop in your own regiment.”

“And still to serve on my staff?” said the General, half questioning the Emperor.

“As you wish it, D’Auvergne.” With that he moved forward ere I could do more than express my gratitude by a respectful bow.

“I told you, Burke, the time would come for this,” said D’Auvergne, as he pressed my hand warmly, and followed the cortege of the Emperor.

Hitherto I had lived an almost isolated life: my staff duties had so separated me from my brother officers, that I only knew them by name; while the other aid-de-camps of the General were men much older than myself, and with none of them had I formed any intimacy whatever. It was not without a sense of this loneliness that I now thought over my promotion. The absence of those who sympathise with our moments of joy and sorrow, reduces our enjoyment to a narrow limit indeed. The only one of all I knew who would really have felt happy in my advancement, was poor Pioche. He was beyond every thought of pleasure or grief. Thus reflecting, I turned towards my quarters at Brunn. It was evening — the watch-fires were lighted, and round them sat groups of soldiers at their supper, chatting away pleasantly, and recounting the events of the battle. Many had been slightly wounded, and by their bandaged foreheads, and disabled arms, claimed a marked pre-eminence above the rest. A straw bivouack, with its great blazing fire in front, would denote some officer’s quarters, and here were generally some eight or ten assembled, while the savoury odour of some smoking dish, and the merry laughter, proclaimed that feasting was not excluded from the life of a campaign.

As I passed one of these, I heard the tones of a voice, which, well known, had somehow not been heard by me for many a day before. Who could it be? I listened, but in vain — I asked myself whose was it — I dismounted, and leading my horse by the bridle, passed before the hut; the strong light of the blazing wood lit up the interior, and showed me a party of about a dozen officers, seated and lying on a heap of straw, occupied in discussing a supper, which, however wanting in all the elegancies of table equipment, even where I stood, had a most appetising odour; various drinking vessels — some of them silver — passed from hand to hand rapidly, and the clinking of cups proclaimed, that although of different regiments — as I saw they were — a kindly feeling united them.

“Well, François,” said the same voice, whose accents were so familiar to me, without my being able to say why — “Well, François, you have not told us how it happened.”

“Easily enough,” said another; “he broke my blade in his back, and gave point afterwards, and ran me through the chest.” It was the ‘Maitre d’armes’ of the fourth, my old antagonist, who said this, and I drew near to hear the remainder. “You could not call the thing unfair,” continued he; “but, after all, no one ever heard of such a *‘passe.’*”

“I could have told you of it though,” rejoined the other, “for I remember once, in the fencing school at the Polytechnique, I saw him catch his antagonist’s blade in his sleeve, and when he had it secure, snap it across, and then thrust home with his own. *Parbleu*, he lost a coat by it, and I believe, at the time, poor fellow, he could ill spare it.”

This story, which was told of myself, was an incident which occurred in a school duel, and was only known to two or three others; and again was I puzzled, to think, which of my former companions the speaker could be. My curiosity was now stronger than aught else, and so, affecting to seek a light for my cigar, I approached the blaze.

"Hallo, comrade, a cup of wine with you," cried out a voice from within, "Melniker is no bad drinking—"

"When Chambertin can't be had," said another, handing me a goblet of red wine.

"*Par St. Denis!* it's the very man himself," shouted a third. "Why, Burke, my old comrade, do you forget Tascher?"

"What!" said I, in amazement, turning from one to the other of the moustached faces, and unable to discover my former friend, while they laughed loud, and long, at my embarrassment.

"Make way for him there — make way, lads. Come, Burke, here's your place," said he, stretching out his hand and pressing me down beside him on the straw. "So you did not remember me?"

In truth, there was enough of change in his appearance, since last I saw him, to warrant my forgetfulness. A dark bushy beard, worn cuirassier fashion, around the mouth and high on the cheeks, almost concealed his face; while in figure he had grown both taller and stouter.

"Art colonel of the 8th regiment?" said he, laughingly; "you know, I promised you were to be, when we were to meet again."

"No: but if I mistake not," said a hussar officer opposite, "Monsieur is in the way to become so. Were

you not named to a troop, about half an hour ago, by the Emperor himself?"

"Yes!" said I, with an effort to suppress my pride.

"*Diantre bleu!*" exclaimed Tascher, "what good fortune you always have. I wish you joy of it, with all my heart. I say, comrades, let us drown his commission for him."

"Agreed — agreed," cried they all in a breath, "François will make us a bowl of punch for the occasion."

"Most willingly," said the little 'Maître d'armes;' "Monsieur le Capitaine, I am sure, bears me no ill-will for our little affair. I thought not," added he, seizing my hand in both his: "*Ma foi!* you spoiled my *tierce* for me — I shall never be the same man again. Now, gentlemen, pass down the brandy, and let the man with most credit go seek for sugar at the canteen."

While François commenced his operations, Tascher proceeded to recount to me the miserable life he had spent in garrison towns, till the outbreak of the campaign had called him on active service.

"It was no use that I asked the Empress to intercede for me, and get me appointed to another regiment; being the nephew of Napoleon, seemed to set a complete bar to my advancement. Even now," said he, "my name has been sent forward by my colonel, for promotion, and I wager you fifty Naps, I shall be passed over."

"And what if you be?" said a huge, heavy-browed major, beside him — "What great hardship is it, to be a lieutenant in the cuirassiers at two and twenty? I was a sergeant ten years later."

"Ay, *parbleu!*" cried another, "I won my epaulettes at Cairo, when three officers were reported living, in a whole regiment."

"To be sure," said François, looking up from his operation of lemon squeezing — "here am I, a Maître d'armes, after twenty-six years' service; and there's Davoust, who never could stand before me, he's a general of brigade."

The whole party laughed aloud at the grievances of Maître François, whose seriousness on the subject was perfectly real.

"Ah! you may laugh," said he, half in pique; "but what a mere accident can determine a man's fortune in life. Would Junot there be a major-general to-day, if he did not measure six feet without his boots? We were at school together, and, *ma foi!* he was always at the bottom of the class."

"And so, François, it was your size then that stopped your promotion?"

"Of course it was. When a man is but five feet — with high heels too — he can only be advanced as a Maître d'armes. *Parbleu!* what should I be now, if I had only grown a little taller."

"It is all better as it is," growled out an old captain, between the puffs of his meerschaum; "if thou wert an inch bigger, there would be no living in the same brigade with thee."

"For all that," rejoined Maître François, "I have put many a pretty fellow his full length on the grass."

"How many duels, François, did you tell us the other evening, that you fought in the 22nd?"

"Seventy-eight!" said the little man — "not to speak of two affairs, which, I am ashamed to confess,

were with the broad-sword; but they were fellows from Alsace, and they knew no better."

"*Tonnerre de ciel!*" cried the major, "a little devil like that is a perfect plague in a regiment. I remember, we had a fellow called Piccotin —"

"Ah! Piccotin — poor Piccotin — we were foster-brothers," interrupted François, "we were both from Chalons-sur-Marne."

"Egad, I'd have sworn you were," rejoined the major. "One might have thought ye were twins."

"People often said so," responded François, with as much composure as though a compliment had been intended — "We both had the same coloured hair and eyes — the same military air — and gave the '*passe en tierce*' always outside the guard, exactly in the same way."

"What became of Piccotin?" asked the major, "he left us at Lyons."

"You never heard, then, what became of him?"

"No: we knew he joined the *Chasseurs à pied*."

"I can tell you, then," said François, "no one knows better. I parted from Piccotin when we were ordered to Egypt. We did our best to obtain service in the same brigade, for we were like brothers, but we could not manage it, and so, with sad hearts, we separated; he, to return to France, I, to sail for Alexandria. This was in the spring of 1798, or, as we called it, the year Six of the Republic. For three years we never met; but when the eighth demi-brigade returned from Egypt, we went into garrison at Bayonne, and the first man I saw on the ramparts was Piccotin himself. There was no mistaking him: you know the way he had of walking with a long stride, rising on his instep at every

step, squaring his elbows, and turning his head from side to side, just to see if any one was pleased to smile, or even so much as to look closely at him. Ah! *ma foi!* little Piccotin knew how to treat such as well as any one. Methinks I see him approaching his man with a slide and a bow, and then taking off his cap, I hear him say in his mildest tone — ‘Monsieur assuredly did not intend that stare and that grimace for me — I know I must have deceived myself; Monsieur is only a fool, he never meant to be impertinent.’ Then, *parbleu*, what a storm would come on, and how cool was Piccotin the whole time — how scrupulously timid he would be of misspelling the gentleman’s name, or misplacing an accent over it — how delicately he would inquire his address, as if the curiosity was only pardonable; and then with what courtesy he would take his leave, retiring half-a-dozen paces before he ventured to turn his back on the man he was determined to kill next morning.”

“Quite true — perfectly true, François,” said the major, “Piccotin did the thing with the most admirable temper and good-breeding.”

“That was the tone of Chalons, when we were both boys,” said François, proudly; “he and I were reared together.” He finished a bumper of wine as he made this satisfactory explanation, and looked round at the company with the air of a conqueror.

“Piccotin saw me, as quickly as I perceived him, and the minute after we were in each other’s arms. ‘Ah! *mon cher*, how many?’ said he to me, as soon as the first burst of enthusiasm subsided.

“‘Only eighteen,’ said I, sadly; ‘but two were Mamelukes of the guard.’

“‘Thou wert ever fortunate, François,’ he replied, wiping his eyes with emotion; ‘I have never pinked any but Christians.’”

“‘Come — come,’ said I, ‘don’t be down-hearted — good times are coming. They say *le petit Caporal* will have us in England soon.’”

“‘Mayhap,’ said he, sorrowfully, for he could not get over my Turks. Well, in order to cheer him up a little, I proposed that we should go and sup together at the ‘Grenadier Rouge,’ and away we went accordingly.

“‘It would amuse you, perhaps,’ said Maître François, “were I to tell some of the stories we related to each other that night. We both had had our share of adventure since we met, and some droll ones among the number. However, that is not the question at present. We sat late — so late, that they came to close the *café* at last, and we were obliged to depart. You know the ‘Grenadier Rouge,’ — don’t you?”

“Yes, I know it well,” replied the major; “it’s over the glacis, about a mile outside the barrier.”

“Just so; and there’s a pleasant walk across the glacis to the gate. As Piccotin and I set out together on our way to the town, the night was calm and mild: a soft moonlight shed a silvery tint over every object, and left the stately poplars to throw a still longer shadow on the smooth grass. For some time we walked along without speaking: the silence of the night, the fragrant air, the mellow light, were all soft and tranquillizing influences, and we each sank into his own reflections.

“When we reached the middle of the plain — you know the spot, I’m sure — there’s a little bronze

fountain, with four cedars round it" — The major nodded, and he resumed: "Piccotin came to a sudden halt, and seizing my hand in both of his, said — 'François, canst thou guess what I'm thinking of?'"

"I looked at him, and I looked around me, and after a few seconds' pause, I answered — 'Yes, Piccotin, I know it, it is a lovely spot.'"

"'Never was any thing like it!' cried he in a rapture; 'look at the turf, smooth as velvet, and yet soft to the foot; see the trees, how they fall back to give the light admittance; and there, that little fountain, if one felt thirsty — eh! — what say you?'"

"'Agreed,' said I, 'grasping him by both hands; for this once — once only, Piccotin.'"

"'Only once, François; a few passes, and no more.'"

"'Just so — the first touch.'"

"'Exactly — the first touch,' said he, as, taking off his cloak, and folding it neatly, he laid it on the grass."

"It was a strange thing, but in all our lives, from earliest boyhood up, we never had measured swords together, and though we were both 'Maître d'armes,' we never crossed blades, even in jest. Often and often had our comrades pitted us against each other, and laid wagers on the result, but we never would consent to meet — I cannot say why. It was not fear — I know not how to account for it, but such was the fact."

"'What blade do you wear, François,' said he, approaching me, as I arranged my jacket and vest, with my cap, on the ground."

"'A Rouen steel,' said I: 'too limber for most men, but I am so accustomed to it, I prefer it.'"

“‘Ah! a pretty weapon, indeed,’ said he, drawing it from the scabbard, and making one or two passes with it against an elder trunk. ‘Was this the blade you had with you in Egypt?’

“‘Yes, I have worn none other for eight years.’

“‘Ah! *ma foi*, those Mamelukes — how I envy you, those Mamelukes,’ he muttered to himself, as he walked back to his place.

“‘Move a little — a very little to the left — there’s a shadow from that tree — can you see me well?’ said I.

“‘Perfectly — are you ready? Well — *en garde!*’

“Piccotin’s forte, I soon saw, lay in the long meditated attack, where each movement was part of an artfully devised series; and I perceived that he suffered his adversary to gain several trifling advantages, by way of giving him a false confidence, biding his own time to pay off the scores. In this description of fence he was more than my equal. *My* strength was in the skirmishing passages, where most men lunge at random; then, no matter how confused the rally, I was as cool as in the salute.

“For some time I permitted him to play his game out; and certainly nothing could be more beautiful than his passes over the hilt. Twice he planted his point within an inch of my bosom; and nothing but a spring backwards would have saved me.

“At length, after a long-contested struggle, he made a feint within, and then without the guard, and succeeded in touching my sword-arm, above the wrist.

“‘A touch, I believe,’ said he.

“‘A mere nothing,’ said I; for although I felt the blood running down my sleeve, and oozing between

my fingers, I was annoyed to think he had made the first hit.

“‘Ah, François, these Mamelukes were not of the ‘première force,’ after all. I have only been jesting all this time — see here.’ With that he closed on me, in a very different style from his former attack. Pushing and parrying with the rapidity of lightning, he evinced a skill in ‘skirmish’ I did not believe him possessed of. In this, however, I was his master, and in a few seconds gave him my point sharply, but not deeply, in the shoulder.

“Instead of dropping his weapon when he received mine, he returned the thrust. I parried it, and touched him again, a little lower down. He winced this time, and muttered something I could not catch. ‘You shall have it now,’ said he, aloud — ‘I owe you this — and this.’ True to his word, he twice pierced me in the back, outside the guard. Encouraged by success, he again closed on me, while I, piqued by his last assault, advanced to meet him.

“Our tempers were both excited; but his far more than mine. The struggle was a severe one. Three several times his blade passed between my arm and my body; and, at last, after a desperate rally, he dropped on one knee, and gave me the point here, beneath the chest. Before he could extricate his blade, I plunged mine into his chest, and pushed till I heard the hilt come clink against his ribs. The blood spurted upwards, over my face and breast, as he fell backwards. I wiped it hurriedly from my eyes, and bent over him. He gave a shudder and a little faint moan, and all was still.

"You killed him?" cried out three or four of us together.

"*Ma foi!* Yes." The coup was mortal — he never stirred after.

"As for me," continued François, "I surrendered myself a prisoner to the officer on guard at the gate. I was tried ten days after by a military commission, and acquitted. My own evidence was my accusation, and my defence."

"*Ventre bleu* — had I been on the court-martial, you had not been here to tell the story," said the old major, as his face became almost purple with passion.

"Nonsense," said Tascher, jeeringly; "what signifies a *Maître d'armes* the more, or the less."

"Monsieur will probably explain himself," said François, with one of his cold smiles of excessive deference.

"It is exactly what I mean to do, François."

"Come, Sirs, none of this," broke in the major. "Lieutenant Tascher, you may not fancy being placed under an arrest, when the enemy is in the field. Master François, do you forget the sentence of a court-martial is hanging over your head, for an affair at Elchingen, where you insulted a young officer of the hussars?"

"In that case, I must be permitted to say that *Maître François* conducted himself like a man of honour," said I.

"*Parbleu* — and got the worst of it besides," cried he, placing his hand on his hip. The tone of his voice, as he said this, and the grimace he made, restored the party once more to good humour, and we chatted away pleasantly till day was breaking.

As Tascher strolled along with me towards my quarters, I was rejoiced to discover that he had never heard of my name as being mixed up in the Chouan conspiracy; nor was he aware with how little reason he believed me to be favoured by fortune.

I received, however, all his congratulations, without any desire to undeceive him. Already had I learned the worldly lesson, that while friends cling closer in adversity, your mere acquaintance deems your popularity your greatest merit; and I at length perceived, that however ungenial, in many respects, the companionship, the life of isolation I led had rendered me suspected by others, and in a career, too, where frankness was considered the first of virtues.

I assented at once, with pleasure, to the prospect of our meeting frequently while in camp. My own regiment had joined Davoust's corps, and I was glad to have the society of some others of my own age, if only to wean myself from my habits of solitude. While I formed these plans for the future, I little anticipated what events were in store for me, nor how soon I should be thrown among scenes and people totally different from those with which I had ever mixed before.

"You mess with us, then, Burke — that's agreed," said Tascher; "They're excellent fellows, these cuirassiers of ours, and I know you'll like them."

With this promise we parted, hoping to meet on the morrow.

CHAPTER XXI.

The mill on the Holitsch road.

AT an early hour on the morning of the 4th, came orders for the "Garde à Cheval," to hold themselves in readiness, with two squadrons of the carabineers, on the road to Holitsch; part of this force being under the command of General D'Auvergne. We found ourselves fully equipped and in waiting soon after eight o'clock. From the "tenue" and appearance of the troops, it was evident that no measure of active service was contemplated. Yet, if a review were intended, we could not guess why so small a force had been selected. As usual on such occasions, many conjectures were hazarded, and a hundred explanations passed current — one scarcely a whit better than the other — when at last we perceived a peloton of dragoons advancing towards us, at a brisk trot.

The word was passed, to close up, and draw swords — and scarcely was it obeyed, when the staff of the Emperor came up. They were all in the full blaze of their gala uniforms, brilliant with crosses and decorations. Napoleon alone wore the simple costume of the "chasseurs" of the "garde," with the decoration of the legion; but his proud look and his flashing eye, made him conspicuous above them all. He was mounted on his favourite charger, "Marengo," and seemed to enjoy the high spirit of the mettled animal, as he tossed his long mane about, and lashed his sides with his great silken tail.

As the cortege passed, we closed up the rear, and followed at a sharp pace, more than ever puzzled to divine what was going forward. After about two hours'

riding, during which we never drew bridle, we saw a party of staff officers in front, who, saluting the Emperor, joined the cortege. At the same instant General D'Auvergne passed close beside me, and whispered in my ear — "Bernadotte has just come up, and been most coldly received." I wished to ask him, what was the object of the whole movement, but he was gone before I could do so. In less than a quarter of an hour afterwards, we left the high road, and entered upon a large plain, where the only object I could perceive was an old mill, ruined and dilapidated. Towards this the imperial staff rode forward, while the peloton in front wheeled about, and rode to the rear of our squadrons. The next moment we were halted, and drawn up in order of battle. While these movements were going forward, I remarked, that the Emperor had dismounted from his horse, and dismissed his staff, all save Marshal Berthier, who stood at a little distance from him. Several dismounted dragoons were employed in lighting two immense fires, a process which Napoleon appeared to watch with great interest for a second or two, and then taking out his glass, he remained for several minutes intently surveying the great road to Holitsch.

In this direction at once, every eye was turned, but nothing could we see. The road led through a wide open country for some miles, and at last disappeared in the recesses of a dark pine wood, that covered the horizon for miles on either side. Meanwhile Napoleon, with his hands clasped behind his back, walked hurriedly backwards and forwards, beside the blazing fires, stopping at intervals to look along the road, and then resuming his walk as before. He was not more than two hundred paces from where we stood, and I

could mark well his gesture of impatience, as he closed his glass each time, after looking in vain towards Holitsch.

"I say, Burke," whispered one of my brother officers beside me, "I should not fancy being the man who keeps him waiting in that fashion. Look at Berthier, how he keeps aloof; he knows that something is brewing."

"What can it all mean?" said I. "Who can he be expecting here?"

"They say now," whispered my companion, "that Davoust cannot hold the bridge of Göding, and must fall back before the Russian column; and that Napoleon has invited Alexander to a conference here, to gain time, to reinforce Davoust?"

"Exactly — but the Czar is too wily an enemy for that to succeed, and probably hence the delay, which appears to irritate him now."

The supposition, more plausible than most of those I heard before, was still contradicted by the account of the Emperor Alexander's retreat; and again was I at a loss to reconcile these discrepancies, when I beheld Napoleon, with his glass to his eye, motion with his hand for Berthier to come forward. I turned towards the road, and now could distinguish in the distance a dark object moving towards us. A few minutes after, the sun shone out, and I remarked the glitter of arms, stretching in a long line, while my companion, with the aid of a glass, called out —

"I see them plainly — they are lancers; the escort are Hungarians, and there's a calèche, with four horses, in front."

The Emperor stood motionless, his arms folded on

his breast, and his head a little leaned forward, exactly as I have seen him represented in so many pictures and statues — his eyes were thrown downwards, and as he stirred the blazing wood with his foot, one could easily perceive how intensely his mind was occupied with deep thought. The clattering sound of cavalry now turned my attention to another quarter, and I saw exactly in front of us, and about five hundred paces off, a regiment of Hungarian hussars and some squadrons of Hulans, drawn up. I had little time to mark their gorgeous equipment and splendid uniform, for already the calèche had drawn up at the road side, and Prince John, of Lichtenstein, descending, took off his chapeau, and offered his arm, to assist another to alight. Slowly and, as it seemed, with effort, a tall thin figure, in the white uniform of the Austrian guard, stepped from the carriage to the ground. The same instant the officers of the staff fell back, and I saw Napoleon advance, with open arms, to embrace him. The Austrian Emperor, for it was Francis himself, seemed scarcely able to control the emotion he felt at this moment; and we could see that his head rested for several seconds on Napoleon's shoulder — and, what a moment must that have been! How deeply must the pride of the descendant of the Cæsars have felt the humiliation, which made him thus, a suppliant before one he deemed a mere Corsican adventurer. What a pang it must have cost his haughty spirit, as he uttered the words, "Mon frère!"

As they walked side by side towards the plateau, where the fires were lighted, it was easy to mark that Napoleon was the speaker, while Francis merely bowed

from time to time, or made a gesture of seeming assent.

As the Emperor arrived at the place of conference, we fell back some fifty yards, and although the air was still and frosty, and the silence was perfect around, we could not catch a word on either side. After about an hour the conversation appeared to assume a tone of gaiety and good-humour, and we could hear the sovereigns laughing repeatedly.

The conference lasted for above two hours, when once more the Emperors embraced, and, as we thought, with more cordiality, and separated. The Emperor of Austria returning, accompanied by Prince Lichtenstein, while Napoleon stood for some minutes beside the fire, as if musing, and then, beckoning his staff to follow, he walked towards the high road.

Scarcely had the Austrian Emperor reached his carriage, when Savary, bare-headed and breathless, stood beside the door of it. He was the bearer of a message from Napoleon. The next moment the calèche started, accompanied by Savary, who with a single aide-camp took the road towards the Austrian headquarters.

As Napoleon was about to mount his horse, I saw General D'Auvergne move forward towards him. A few words passed between them, and then the general riding up to where I stood, said, "Burke, you are to remain here, and if any orders arrive from General Savary, hasten with them to the head-quarters of his Majesty. In twelve hours you will be relieved." So saying, he galloped back to the imperial staff, and soon after the squadrons defiled into the road, the cortege dashed forward, and all that remained of that me-

morable scene was the dying embers of the fires, beside which the fate of Europe was decided.

The old mill of Holitsch had been deserted, when the Austrian and Russian columns took up their position before Austerlitz. The miller and his household fled at the first news of the advance, and had not dared to return. It was a solitary spot at best — a wild heath, without shelter of any kind, stretched away for miles on all sides — but now, in its utter loneliness, it was the most miserable-looking place can be conceived. While, therefore, I contented myself with the hope that my stay there might not be long, I resolved to do what I could to render my quarters more comfortable. My first care was my horse, which I picquetted in the kitchen, where I was happy to find an abundant supply of firewood; my next was to explore the remainder of the concern, in which I discovered traces of its having been already occupied by the allied troops — rude caricatures of the French army, in full “*déroute*,” before terrible-looking dragoons, in Austrian and Russian uniforms, ornamented the walls in many parts; whole columns of French prisoners were depicted begging their lives from a single Austrian grenadier: and one figure, which, it could easily be discovered, was intended for Napoleon himself, was about to be hanged upon a tree, to the very marked satisfaction, as it would seem, of a group of Russian officers, who stood by, laughing. It is easy to smile at the ridicule of which fortune has thwarted the application — and so I amused myself a good while by contemplating these grotesque frescoes; but a more welcome sight still awaited me, in a small chamber at the top of the building, where, in large letters, written with chalk on the door, I read, “Ritt-

meister von Oxenhausen's quarters"—here, to my exceeding delight, I discovered a neatly furnished chamber, with a bed, sofa, and, better still, a table—on which the remains of the Rittmeister's supper yet stood: a goodly ham, the greater part of a capon, a loaf of wheaten bread, and an earthenware crock, with a lid of brass, containing about two bottles of Austrian red wine. This was a most agreeable surprise to me—a pleasant exchange for the meagre meal of bread and cheese I had but time to procure from a sergeant of my troop, at parting. It need not be supposed that I hesitated long about becoming the Rittmeister's successor—and so, I drew the chair to the table, and the table nearer to the fire—for, singularly enough, the embers of a wood fire still slumbered on the hearth. Having taken the keen edge off an appetite, the cold air had whetted to the sharpest, I began an inspection of my quarters—first having replenished the fire with some logs of wood.

The chamber was an octagon, with five windows in as many of the faces—a fire-place and two doors occupying the other three. One of the doors, that by which I entered, opened from the stairs—the other led into a granary, or something of that nature—at least, so I conjectured, from a heap of sacks which littered the floor, and filled one corner completely. As I could not discover any corn, I resolved on sharing my loaf with my horse, a meal every campaigning steed is well accustomed to make; and now, returning to my little chamber, I resumed my supper with all the satisfaction of one who felt that he had made his rounds of duty, and might enjoy repose.

As I knew the Chateau de Holitsch, where the Em-

peror Francis held his quarters, was some six leagues distant, I guessed that General Savary was not likely to return from his mission before morning at very soonest; and so it behoved me to make my arrangements for passing the night where I was. Having then looked to my horse, for whose bedding I made free with some dozen of the corn-sacks in the granary, I brought up to my own quarters a supply of wood; and having fastened the door, and secured the windows as well as I was able, I lit my meerschaum, and lay down before the fire in as happy a frame of mind as need be. Indeed I began to fancy that fortune had done tormenting, and was now about to treat me more kindly. The notice of the Emperor had relieved my heart of a load, which never ceased to press on it, and I could not help feeling that a fairer prospect was opening before me. It is true, time and misfortune had both blunted the ardour of enthusiasm with which I started in life — the daring aspirations after liberty — the high-souled desire for personal distinction, had subsided into calmer hopes and less ambitious yearnings. Young as I yet was, I experienced in myself that change of sentiment and feeling which comes upon other men later on in life, and I was gradually reconciling myself to that sense of duty which teaches a man well to play his part, in whatever station he may be called to act, rather than indulge in those overweening wishes for pre-eminence, which in their accomplishment are so often disappointing, and in their failure a source of regret and unhappiness. These feelings were impressed on me, more by the force of events than by any process of my own reasoning. The career in which I first started as a boy, had led to nothing but misfortune.

The affection I conceived for one — the only one I ever loved — was destined equally to end unhappily. The passion for liberty, in which all my first aspirations were centred, had met the rude shocks, which my own convictions suggested; and I now perceived that I must begin life anew, endeavouring to forget the influences, whose shadows darkened my early days, and carve out my destiny in a very different path from what I once intended.

These were my last waking thoughts, as my head sank on my arm, and I fell into a deep sleep. The falling of a log from the fire awoke me suddenly. I rubbed my eyes, and for a second or two could not remember where I was. At length I became clearer in mind, and, looking at my watch, perceived it was but two o'clock. As the flame of the replenished fire threw its light through the room, I remarked that the door into the granary stood ajar. This struck me as strange. I thought I could remember shutting it before I went to sleep. Yes; I recollected perfectly placing a chair against it as the latch was bad, and a draught of cold air came in that way; and now the chair was pushed back into the room, and the door lay open. A vague feeling, half suspicion, half curiosity, kept me thinking of the circumstance, when, by chance — the merest chance — my eyes fell upon the table, where I had left my sabre and my pistols. What was my amazement to find that one of the latter — that which lay nearest the door — was missing? In an instant I was on my feet. Nothing can combat drowsiness like the sense of fear; and I became perfectly awake in a moment. Examining the room with caution, I found every thing in the same state as I had left it, save the door and the missing

pistol. The granary alone, then, could be the shelter of the invader, whoever he might be. What was to be done? I was totally unprovided with light, save what the fire afforded, and even were it otherwise, I should expose myself by carrying one, long before I could hope to detect a concealed enemy. The best plan I could hit upon seemed to secure the door once more; and then placing myself in such a position as not to be commanded by it again, to wait for morning patiently. This, then, I did at once; and having examined my remaining pistol, and found the charge and priming all safe, I drew my sabre, and sat down between the door and the window, but so that it should open against me.

Few sensations are more acutely painful than the exercise of the hearing, when pushed to intensity. The unceasing effort to catch the slightest sound, soon becomes fatigue; and as the organ grows weary, the mental anxiety grows more acute, and then begins a struggle between the failing sense and the excited brain. The spectral images of the eye, in fever, are not one half so terrible as the strange discordant tones that jar upon the tympanum in such a state as this. Each inanimate object seems endowed with its own power of voice, and whispering noises come stealing through the dead silence of midnight.

In this state of almost frenzied anxiety I sat long — my eyes turned towards the door, which oftentimes I fancied I could perceive to move. At length the thought occurred to me, that by affecting sleep, if any one lay concealed within, whose object was to enter the room, this would probably induce him.

I had not long to wait for the success of my scheme. The long-drawn breathing of my seeming slumber was

not continued for more than a few minutes, when I saw the door slowly, almost imperceptibly, move. At first it stirred inch by inch — then gradually it opened wider and wider till it met the obstacle of the chair. There now came a pause of several seconds, during which it demanded all my efforts to sustain my part — the throbbing at my throat and temples increasing almost beyond endurance, and the impulse to dash forward, and flinging wide the door, confront my enemy, being nearly too much for my resistance. Again it moved noiselessly as before — and then a hand stole out, and, laying hold of the chair, pushed it slowly backwards. The grey light of the breaking day fell upon the spot, and I could see that the cuff of the coat was laced with gold. This time my anxiety became intense. Another second or two and I should be engaged in the conflict — I knew not against how many. I clutched my sabre more fairly in my grasp, as my breathing grew thicker and shorter. The chair still continued to slide silently into the room, and already the arm of the man within protruded. Now was the moment, or never, and, with a spring, I threw myself on it, and, pinioning the wrist in my hands, held it down upon the floor while I opposed my weight against the door. Quick as lightning the other hand appeared, armed with a pistol, and I had but a moment to crouch my head nearly to the ground, when a bullet whizzed past and smashed through the window behind me — while, with a crash, the frail door gave way to a strong push, and a man sprang fiercely forward to seize me by the throat. Jumping backward I recovered my feet, but before I could raise my pistol he made a spring at me, and we both rolled together

on the floor. On the pistol both our hands met, and the struggle was for the weapon. Twice was it pointed at my heart; but my hand held the lock, and not all his efforts could unclasp it. At last I freed my right hand from the sword-knot of my sabre, and, striking him with my clenched knuckles on the forehead, threw him back. His grasp relaxed at the instant, and I wrenched the pistol from his fingers, and placed the muzzle against his chest. Another second and he would have rolled a corpse before me, when, to my horror and amazement, I saw in my antagonist my once friend, Henri de Beauvais. I flung the weapon from me, as I cried out, "De Beauvais forgive me — forgive me." A deathly paleness came over his features; his eyes grew glazed and filmy, and with a low groan, he fell fainting on the floor. I bathed his temples with water; I moistened his pale lips; I rubbed his clammy fingers; but it was long before he rallied, and when he did come to himself, and looked up, he closed his eyes again, as though the sight of me was worse than death itself.

"Come, Henri," said I, "a cup of wine, my friend! and you will be better presently. Thank God this has not ended as it might." He raised his eyes towards me, but with a look of proud and unforgiving sternness, while he uttered not a word.

"It is unfair to blame me, De Beauvais, for this," said I. "Once more I say forgive me."

His lips moved, and some sounds came forth, but I could not hear the words.

"There, there," cried I, "it 's past and over now. Here is my hand."

"You struck me with that hand," said he in a deep, distinct voice, as though every word came from the very bottom of his chest.

"And if I did, Henri, my own life was on the blow."

"Oh that you had taken mine with it!" said he, with a bitterness I can never forget. "I am the first of my name that ever received a blow. Would I were to be the last!"

"You forget, De Beauvais —"

"No, Sir, I forget nothing. Be assured, too, I never shall forget this night. With any other than yourself I should not despair of that atonement for an injury, which alone can wash out such a stain; but *you* — I know you well — *you* will not give me this."

"You are right, Beauvais — I will not," said I calmly. "Sorry am I that even an accident should have brought us into collision. It is a mischance I feel deeply, and shall for many a day."

"And I, Sir," cried he, as starting up his eyes flashed with passion, and his cheek grew scarlet — "and I, Sir — what are to be my feelings? Think you that because I am an exile and an outcast — forced by misfortune to wear the livery of one who is not my rightful sovereign, that my sense of personal honour is the less, and that the mark of an insult is not as blood-stained on my conscience as ever it was?"

"Nothing but passion could blind you to the fact, that there can be no insult where no intention could exist."

"Spare me your casuistry, Sir," replied he, with an insolent wave of his hand, while he sank into a chair, and laid his head upon the table.

For an instant, my temper, provoked beyond endurance, was about to give way, when I perceived that a handkerchief was bound tightly around his leg above the knee, where a great stain of blood marked his trouser. The thought of his being wounded banished every particle of resentment, and laying my hand on his shoulder, I said —

“De Beauvais, I know not one but yourself to whom I would three times say, forgive me; but we were friends once, when we were both happier! For the sake of him who is no more — poor Charles de Meudon —”

“A traitor, Sir — a base traitor to the king of his fathers.”

“This I will not endure,” said I passionately; “No one shall dare —”

“Dare!”

“Ay, dare, Sir — such was the word. To asperse the memory of one like him, is to dare that, which no man can with truth and honour.”

“Come, Sir, I’m ready” said Beauvais, rising, and pointing to the door — “*Sortons!*” No one who has not heard that one word pronounced by the lips of a Frenchman, can conceive how much of savage enmity and deadly purpose it implies. It is the challenge, which, if unaccepted, stamps cowardice for ever on the man who declines it; from that hour, all equality ceases between those whom a combat had placed on the same footing.

“*Sortons!*” The word rung in my ears, and tingled through my very heart, while a host of different impulses swayed me. Shame, sorrow, wounded pride, all struggling for the mastery; but, above them all, a

better and a higher spirit — the firm resolve, come what would, to suffer no provocation Beauvais could offer, to make me stand opposite him as an enemy.

“What am I to think, Sir?” said he, with a voice scarcely articulate from passion. “What am I to think of your hesitation — or why do you stand inactive here? Is it that you are meditating what new insult can be added to those you have heaped on me?”

“No, Sir,” I replied firmly; “so far from thinking of offence, I am but too, too sorry for the words I have already spoken. I should have remembered, and remembering, should have made allowance for the strength of partisan feelings, which have their origin in a noble but as I believe, a mistaken source.”

“Indeed!” interrupted he, in mockery; “is it then come to this? Am I, a Frenchman born, to be lectured on my loyalty and allegiance by a foreign mercenary!”

“Not even that taunt, Beauvais, shall avail you any thing; I am firm in my resolve.”

“*Par Dieu!* then,” cried he with savage energy, “there remains but this.” — As he spoke, he leaped from his chair, and sprung towards me. In so doing, however, his knee struck the table, and with a groan of agony he reeled back and fell upon the floor, while from his re-opened wound a torrent of blood gushed out and deluged the room.

For a second or two he motioned me away with his hand; but as his weakness increased, he lay passive and unresisting, and suffered me to arrest the bleeding by such means as I was able to practise.

It was a long time ere I could stanch the gaping orifice, which had been inflicted by a sabre, and cut clean through the high boot, and deep into the thigh.

Fortunately for his recovery, he had himself succeeded in getting off the boat before, and the wound lay open to my surgical skill. Lifting him cautiously in my arms, I laid him on the bed, and moistened his lips with a little wine. Still the debility continued; no signs of returning strength were there, but his features, pale and fallen, were glazed with a cold sweat that hung in heavy drops upon his brow and forehead. Never was agony like mine. I saw his life was ebbing fast; the respiration was growing fainter and more irregular; his pulse could scarce be felt; yet dare I not leave my post to seek for assistance. A hundred thoughts whirled through my puzzled brain, and, among the rest, the self-accusing one, that I was the cause of his death. Yes, thought I, better far to have stood before his pistol, at all the hazard of my life, than see him thus.

In an instant all his angry speeches and his insulting gestures were forgotten. He looked so like what I once knew him, that my mind was wandering back again to former scenes and times, and all resentment was lost in the flood of memory.

Poor fellow — what a sad destiny was his; fighting against the arms of his country — a mourner over the triumphs of his native land. Alien that I was, this pang at least was spared me. As these thoughts crossed my mind, I felt him press my hand. Overjoyed, I knelt down and whispered some words in his ear.

“No, no,” muttered he in a low plaintive tone; “not all lost — not all; La Vendée yet remains.” He was dreaming.

CHAPTER XXII.

The armistice.

As I sat thus watching with steadfast gaze the features of the sleeping man, I heard the clattering of a horse's hoofs on the pavement beneath, and the next moment the heavy step of some one ascending the stairs. Suddenly the door was flung wide open, and an officer in the handsome uniform of the Austrian Imperial Guard, entered.

"Excuse this scant ceremony, Monsieur," said he, bowing with much courtesy, "but I almost despaired of finding you out. I come from Holitsch with despatches for your Emperor; they are most pressing, as I believe this note will inform you.

While I threw my eye over the few lines addressed by General Savary to the officer in waiting at Holitsch, and commanding the utmost speed in forwarding the despatch that accompanied them, the officer drew near the bed where De Beauvais was lying.

"*Mère de ciel*, it is the count!" cried he, starting back with astonishment.

"Yes," said I, interrupting him; "I found him here on my arrival; he is badly wounded, and should be removed at once. How can this be done?"

"Easily. I'll despatch my orderly at once to Holitsch, and remain here till he return."

"But if our troops advance?"

"No, no; we're all safe on that score — the armistice is signed. The very despatch in your hands, I believe, concludes the treaty."

This warned me that I was delaying too long the important duty entrusted to me, and with a hurried

entreaty to the Austrian not to leave De Beauvais, I hastened down the stairs, and proceeded to saddle for the road.

"One word, Monsieur," said the officer, as I was in the act of mounting. "May I ask the name of him to whom my brother-officers owe the life of a comrade much beloved?"

"My name is Burke — and yours, Monsieur?"

"Berghausen, chef d'escadron of the Imperial Guard. If ever you should come to Vienna" — but I lost the words that followed, as, spurring my horse to a gallop, I set out towards the head-quarters of the Emperor.

As I rode forward, my eyes were ever anxiously bent in the direction of our camp, not knowing at what moment I might see the advance of a column along the road, and dreading lest, before the despatches should reach the Emperor's house, the advanced vedettes should capture the little party at Holitsch. At no period of his career was Napoleon more incensed against the adherents of the Bourbons; and if De Beauvais should fall into his hands, I was well aware that nothing could save him. The Emperor always connected in his mind, and with good reason too, the machinations of the royalists with the plans of the English government. He knew that the land which afforded the asylum to their king, was the refuge of the others also; and many of the heaviest denunciations against the "perfidious Albion," had no other source than the dread of which he could never divest himself, that the legitimate monarch would one day be restored to France.

While such were Napoleon's feelings, the death of the Duc D'Enghien had heightened the hatred of the Bourbonists to a pitch little short of madness. My own

unhappy experience made me more than ever fearful of being in any way implicated with the members of this party, and I rode on, as though life itself depended on my reaching the imperial head-quarters some few minutes earlier.

As I approached the camp, I was overjoyed to find that no movement was in contemplation. The men were engaged in cleaning their arms and accoutrements, restoring the broken waggons and gun-carriages, and repairing, as far as might be, the disorders of the day of battle. The officers stood in groups here and there, chatting at their ease, while the only men under arms were the new conscripts just arrived from France — a force of some thousands — brought by forced marches from the banks of the Rhine.

The crowd of officers near the head-quarters of the Emperor, pressed closely about me as I descended from my horse, eager to learn what information I brought from Holitsch, for they were not aware that I had been stationed nearly half-way on the road.

“Well, Burke,” said General D’Auvergne, as he drew his arm within mine, “your coming has been anxiously looked for this morning. I trust the despatches you carry, may, if not contradict, at least, explain what has occurred.”

“Is this the officer from Holitsch?” said the aide-camp of the Emperor, coming hurriedly forward. “The despatch, Sir,” cried he, and the next moment hastened to the little hut, which Napoleon occupied as his bivouack. The only other person in the open space where I stood, was an officer of the lancers, whose splashed and travel-stained dress seemed to say he had been employed like myself.

"I fancy, Monsieur," said he bowing, "that you have had a sharp ride also this morning. I have just arrived from Göding — four leagues — in less than an hour, and, with all that, too late, I believe, to remedy what has occurred."

"What then has happened?"

"Davoust has been tricked into an armistice, and suffered the Russians to pass the bridge. The Emperor Alexander has taken advantage of the negotiations with Austria, and got his army clear through — so, at least, it would seem — I saw Napoleon tear the despatch into fragments, and stamp his foot upon them — but here he comes."

The words were scarcely spoken when the Emperor came rapidly up, followed by his staff. He wore a grey surtout, trimmed with dark fur, and had his hands clasped within the cuffs of the coat. His face was pale as death, and, save a slight contraction of his brows, there was nothing to show any appearance of displeasure.

"Who brought the despatch from Göding?"

"I did, Sire," said the officer.

"How are the roads, Sir?"

"Much cut up, and in one place a torrent has carried away part of a bridge."

"I knew it. I knew it," said he bitterly; "it is too late. Duroc," cried he, while the words seemed to come forth with a hissing sound, "did I not tell you, *'Grattez le Russe, et vous trouverez le Tartare!'*"

The words were graven in my memory from that hour; even yet, I can recall the very accents as when I heard them.

"And you, Sir," said he, turning suddenly towards

me, "you came from General Savary. Return to him with this letter. Have you written, Duroc? Well, you'll deliver this to General Savary at Holitsch — he may require you to proceed to Göding — are you well mounted?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Come, then, Sir; I made you a captain yesterday; let us see if you can win your spurs to-day."

From the time I received the despatch, to that in which I was in the saddle, not more than five minutes elapsed. The idea of being chosen by the Emperor himself for a service, was a proud one, and I resolved to acquit myself with credit. With what concert does one's heart beat to the free stride of a mettled charger; how does each bold plunge warm the blood and stir up the spirits; and as, careering free over hill and valley, we pass in our flight the clouds that drift above, how does the sense of freedom, realized as it is, impart a feeling of ecstasy to our minds — our thoughts, revelling on the wayward liberty our course suggests, rise free and untrammelled from the doubts and cares of every-day life. Onward I went, and soon the old mill came in sight, rearing its ruined head amid the black desolation of the plain. I could not resist the impulse to see what had become of Beauvais, and leading my horse into the kitchen, I hastened up the stairs, and through the rooms; but all were deserted; the little chamber lay open — the granary too — but no one was there.

With a mind relieved, in a great measure, from anxiety, I remounted and continued my way; and soon entered the dark woods of Holitsch. The chateau and demesne of Holitsch were a private estate of the Em-

peror Francis, and once formed a favourite resort of Joseph the Second, in his hunting excursions. The chateau itself was a large irregular mass of building; but still, with all its incongruity of architecture, not devoid of picturesque effect; and the older portion of it was even handsome. While I stood in front of a long terrace, on which several windows opened from a gallery that ran along one side of the chateau, I was somewhat surprised that no guard was to be seen, nor even a single sentinel on duty. I dismounted, and leading my horse, approached the avenue that led up between a double range of statues to the door. An old man, dressed in the slouched hat and light blue jacket of a Bohemian peasant, was busily engaged in wrapping matting around some shrubs, to protect them from the frost. A little boy — his second-self in costume — stood beside him, with his pruning-knife, and stared at me with a kind of stupid wonder as I approached. With some difficulty I made out from the old man, that the Emperor occupied a smaller building called the Kaiser-Lust, about half a league distant in the forest, having given strict orders that no one was to approach the chateau nor its immediate grounds. It was his favourite retreat, and, perhaps, he did not wish it should be associated in his mind with a period of such misfortune. The old peasant continued his occupation while he spoke, never lifting his head from his work, and seeming all absorbed in the necessity of what he was engaged in. As I inquired the nearest road to the imperial quarters, he employed me to assist him for a moment in his task, by holding one end of the matting, with which he was now about to envelope a marble statue of Maria Theresa.

I could not refuse a request so naturally proffered, and while I did so, a little wicket opened at a short distance off, and a tall man, in a grey surtout and a plain cocked-hat without a feather, came forward; he held a riding-whip in his hand, and seemed, from his splashed equipment, to have just descended from the saddle.

"Well, Fritz," said he, "I hope the frost has done us no mischief?"

The old gardener turned round at the words, and, touching his hat respectfully, continued his work, while he replied, "No, Mein Herr, it was but a white hoar, and every thing has escaped well."

"And whom have you got here for an assistant, may I ask?" said he, pointing to me, whom he now saw for the first time. As the question was asked in German, although I understood it, I left the reply to the gardener.

"God knows," said the old fellow in a tone of easy indifference; "I think he must be a soldier of some sort."

The other smiled at the remark, and turning towards me, said in French — "You are, perhaps, unaware, Sir, being a stranger, that it is the Emperor of Austria's desire, this chateau should not be intruded on."

"My offending, Sir," interrupted I, "was purely accidental. I am the bearer of despatches for General Savary; and, having stopped to inquire from this honest man —"

"The General has taken his departure for Göding," he broke in, without paying further attention to my explanation.

"For Göding; and may I ask, what distance that may be?"

"Scarcely a league, if you can hit upon the right path; the road lies yonder, where you see that dead fir-tree."

"I thank you, Sir," said I, touching my hat; "and must now ask my friend here to release me — my orders are of moment."

"You may find some difficulty in the wood, after all," said he; "I'll send my groom part of the way with you."

Before I could proffer my thanks suitably for such an unexpected politeness, he had disappeared in the garden through which he entered a few minutes before.

"I say, my worthy friend, tell me the name of that gentleman — he's one of the Emperor's staff, if I mistake not. I'm certain I've seen the face before."

"If you had," said the old fellow, laughing, "you could scarcely forget him — old Frantzerl is just the same these twenty years."

"Whom did you say?"

Before he could reply, the other was at my side.

"Now, Sir," said he, "he will conduct you to the high road. I wish you a good journey."

These words were uttered in a tone somewhat more haughty than his previous ones; and contenting myself with a civil acknowledgment of his attention, I bowed and returned to my horse, which the little peasant child had been holding.

"This way, Monsieur," said the groom, who, dressed in a plain dark brown livery, was mounted on a horse of great size and symmetry.

As he spoke, he dashed forward at a gallop, which all my efforts could not succeed in overtaking. In less than ten minutes, the man halted, and waiting till I came up, he pointed to a gentle acclivity before me, across which the high road led.

"There lies the road, Sir; continue your speed, and in twenty minutes you reach Göding."

"One word," said I, drawing forth my purse as I spoke; "one word. Tell me, who is your master?"

The groom smiled, slightly touched his hat, and, without uttering a word, wheeled round his horse, and, before I could repeat my question, was far on his road back to the chateau.

Before me lay the river, and the little bridge of Göding, across which now the Russian columns were marching in rapid but compact order. Their cavalry had nearly all passed, and was drawn with some field-guns along the bank; while, at half-cannon-shot distance, the corps of Davoust were drawn up in order of battle, and standing spectators of the scene. On an eminence of the field, a splendid staff were assembled, accompanied by a troop of Tartar horsemen, whose gay colours, and strange equipment were a remarkable feature of the picture; and here I learned, that the Emperor Alexander then was, accompanied by General Savary.

As I drew near, my French uniform caught the eye of the latter, and he cantered forward to meet me. Tearing open the despatch with eagerness, he rapidly perused the few lines it contained; then seizing me by the arm, in his strong grasp he exclaimed —

"Look yonder, Sir; you see their columns extending to Serritz. Go back and tell his Majesty; but no —

my own mission here is ended. You may return to Austerlitz."

So saying he rode back to the group around the Emperor, where I saw him a few minutes after addressing his majesty, and then, after a formal leave-taking, turned his horse's head and set out towards Brunn.

As I retraced my steps towards the camp, I began to muse over the events which had just occurred; and even by the imperfect glimpses I could catch of the negotiations, could perceive that the Czar had outmanœuvred Napoleon. It is true, I was not aware by what means the success had been obtained, nor was it for many a year after that I became cognizant of the few autograph lines by which Alexander induced Davoust to suspend his operations, under the pretence that the Austrian armistice included the Russian army. It was an unworthy act, and ill-befitting one, whose high personal courage and chivalrous bearing gave promise of better things.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The "Compagnie d'élite."

WITH whatever triumphant feelings the Emperor Napoleon may have witnessed the glorious termination of this brief campaign, to the young officers of the army it brought any thing rather than satisfaction; and the news of the armistice was received in the camp with gloom and discontent.

The brilliant action at Elchingen, and the great victory at Austerlitz, were hailed as a glorious presage of future successes, for which the high-sounding phrases of a bulletin were deemed but a poor requital. A great proportion of the army were new levies, who had

not seen service, and felt proportionably desirous for opportunities of distinction; and to them the promise of a triumphant return to France was a miserable exchange for those battle-fields on which they dreamed they should win honour and fame, and from whence they hoped to date their rise of fortune. Little did we guess, that while words of peace and avowals of moderation were on his lips, Napoleon was at that very moment meditating on the opening of that great campaign, which, beginning at Jena, was to end in the most bloody and long-sustained of all his wars.

Nothing, however, was now talked of but the fêtes which awaited us on our return to Paris, while liberal grants of money were made to all the wounded; and no effort was spared which should mark that feeling of the Emperor's, which so conspicuously opened his bulletin, in the emphatic words — "Soldiers, I am content with you."

Napoleon well understood, and indeed appeared to have anticipated, the disappointment the army would experience, at this sudden cessation of hostilities, and endeavoured now to divert the torrent of their enthusiasm into another and a safer channel. The bulk of the army were cantoned around Brunn and Olmutz; some picked regiments were recalled to Vienna, where the Emperor was soon expected to establish his headquarters, while many of those who had suffered most severely from forced marches and fatigues, were formed into corps of escort, to accompany the Russian prisoners — sixteen thousand in number — on their way to France; and lastly, a "*Compagnie d'élite*," as it was called, was selected to carry to the senate the glorious spoils of victory — forty-five standards, taken on the

field of Austerlitz, and now destined to grace the Palace of the Luxembourg.

I had scarcely seated myself to the humble supper of my bivouack, when an orderly came to command me to General D'Auvergne's quarters. The little sitting-room he occupied, in a peasant hut, was so filled with officers, that it was some time before I could approach him; and my impatience was not lessened, by more than once hearing my name mentioned aloud, a circumstance not a little trying to a young man in the presence of his superiors in station.

"But here he is," said the General, beckoning to me to come forward. "Burke, his Majesty has most graciously permitted me to include your name in the *Compagnie d'élite*, a testimony of his satisfaction you've every reason to be proud of; and just at the moment I was about to communicate the fact to you, I have received a message from Marshal Murat, requesting that I may permit you to serve on his own staff—"

"Yes, Captain," said an officer in the uniform of a colonel—it was the first time I had been addressed by my new title, and I cannot express what a thrill of pleasure the word gave me—"Marshal Murat witnessed with pleasure the alacrity and steadiness of your conduct on the 2nd, and has sent me with an offer which I fancy few officers would not deem a flattering one."

"Unquestionably it is, Colonel," said General D'Auvergne. "Nay, more I will say, I regard it as the making of a young man's fortune, thus early in his career to have attracted such high notice; but I must be passive here—Captain Burke shall decide for himself."

"In that case, Sir, I shall cause you but little delay, if you will still permit me to serve on your own staff."

"But stay, my boy, do not be rash in this affair; I will not insult your better feeling, by dwelling on the little power I possess, and the very great enjoyed by Marshal Murat, of serving your interests; but I must say, that with him, and on his personal staff, opportunities of distinction —"

"And here, I must interpose," said the Colonel, smiling courteously: "with no officer of this army can a man expect to see service, in its boldest and most heroic colours, rather than with General D'Auvergne."

"I know it — I feel it, too, and with him, if he will allow me —"

"Enough, my dear boy," said the old man, grasping my hand in his. "Colonel, you must explain to the Marshal how stands this matter; and he is too kind of heart, and too noble of soul, to think the worse of any of us for our obstinacy; and now, my young friend, make your arrangements to join the *Compagnie d'élite* — they march to-morrow afternoon, and this is a service you cannot decline. Leave me to make your acknowledgments to the Marshal, and lose no more time here."

Short as had been my absence from my quarters, when I re-entered, I descried Tascher seated at the table, and busily employed in discussing the last fragments of my supper. "You see, my dear friend," said he, speaking with his mouth full, "you see what it is to have a '*salmi*' for supper. I sat eating a confounded mess of black bread, and blacker veal, for fifteen minutes, when the breeze brought me the odour of your

delicious 'plat.' It was in vain I summoned all my virtue to resist it; if there ever was a dish made to seduce a subaltern on service, it is this; but I say, won't you eat something?"

"I fear not," said I, half angrily.

"And why?" replied he. "See what a capital wing that is — a little bare, to be sure — and there's the back of a pigeon. *Ma foi!* — you've no reason to complain. I say — is it true you are named among the '*Compagnie d'élite*'?"

I nodded, and eat on.

"*Diable!* There never was such fortune. What a glorious exchange for this confounded swamp, with its everlasting drill, from morning to night, shivering under arms for four hours, and shaking with the ague the rest of the day after — marching, mid-leg in water, half frozen, and trying quick movements, when the very blood is in icicles; and then you'll be enjoying Paris — delightful Paris — dining at, the "*Rocher*," supping at, the "*Cadran*," lounging into the salons, at the very time we shall be hiding ourselves amidst the straw of our bivouacks. I go mad to think of it; and what's worse than all — there you sit, as little elated, as if the whole thing were only the most natural in the world. I believe, on my word, you'd not condescend to be surprised, if you were gazetted *Maréchal de France*, in to-morrow's gazette."

"When I can bear, without testifying too much astonishment, to see my supper eaten by the man who does nothing but rate me into the bargain, perhaps I may plume myself on some equanimity of temper."

"Confound your equanimity. It's very easy to be satisfied, when one has every thing his own way."

"And so, Tascher, you deem me such a fortunate fellow."

"That I do," replied he, quickly: "you have had more good luck, and made less of it, than any one I ever knew. What a career you had before you when we met first. There was that pretty girl at the Tuilleries, quite ready to fall in love with you. I know it, because she rather took an air of coldness with me. Well, you let her be carried off by an old general, with a white head and a queue — unquestionably a bit of pique on her part. Then, somehow or other, you contrived to pink the best swordsman of the army, little François there; and I never heard that the circumstance gained you a single conquest."

"Quite true, my friend," said I, laughing, "I confess it all; and what is far worse — I acknowledge that until this moment I did not even know the advantages I was wilfully wasting."

"And even now," continued he, not minding my interruption — "even now, you are about to return to Paris, as one of the *'élite.'* Well, I 'll wager twenty Naps that the only civil speeches you 'll hear, will be from some musty old senators at the Luxembourg. Oh, dear! if my amiable aunt, the Empress, would only induce my most benevolent uncle, the Emperor, to put me on that same list, depend upon it you 'd hear of Lieutenant Tascher in the *'Faubourg St. Honoré.'*"

"But you seem to forget," said I, half piqued at last by the impertinence of his tone, "that I have neither friends nor acquaintances — that although a Frenchman by service, I am not so by birth."

"And I — what am I?" interrupted he — "a Creole, come from heaven knows what far away place beyond

seas — that there never was a man with more expensive tastes, and a smaller means to supply them — with worse prospects, and better connections; — in short, a kind of live antithesis; and yet, with all that, exchange places with me now, and see if, before a fortnight elapse, I have not more dinner invitations than any officer of the same grade within the Boulevards. Watch, if the prettiest girl at Paris is not at my side in the opera. But here comes your official appointment — I take it.” As he said this, an orderly of the “Garde” delivered a sealed packet into my hands, which on opening, I discovered was a letter from General Duroc, wherein I read, “that it was the wish of his Majesty, Emperor, and King, that I, his well-beloved Thomas Burke, in conformity with certain instructions, to be afterwards made known to me, should proceed with the *Compagnie d’élite* to Paris, then and there—”

As I read thus far aloud, Tascher interrupted me, snatching the paper from my hands, and continued thus — “Then, and there, to mope, muse, and be *ennuyée*, until such time as active service may again recall him to the army. My dear Burke, I am really sorry for you — wars and campaigning may be, indeed they are, very fine things, but as the means, not the end. His Majesty, my uncle — whom may heaven preserve, and soften his heart to his relations — loves them for their own sake; but we, you and I, for instance, what possible reason can we have for risking our bones, and getting our flesh mangled, save the hope of promotion — and to what end that same promotion, if not for a wider sphere of pleasure and enjoyment? Think what a career a colonel, at our age, would have in Paris.”

“Come, Tascher, I will not believe you in all this.

If there were not something higher to reward one for the fatigues and dangers of a campaign, than the mere sensual delights you allude to, I, for one, would soon doff the epaulettes."

"You are impracticable," said he, half angrily; "but it is as much from the isolation in which you have lived, as any conviction on the subject. You must let me introduce you to some relatives of mine in Paris, they will be delighted to know you — for, as one of the *Compagnie d'élite*, you might figure as a very respectable "*Lion*" for two, nay, three, entire evenings — and you will have the *entrée* to the pleasantest house in Paris — they receive every evening — and all the best people resort there. I only exact one condition.

"And that is —"

"You must not make love to Pauline. That you will fall in love with her, yourself, is a fact I can't help — nor you either. But no advance on your part — promise me that."

"In such case, Tascher, it were best for all parties I should not know the lady. I have no fancy, believe me, for being smitten, whether I will or no."

"I see, Master Burke, there is a bit of impertinence in all this — you sneer at my warnings about '*la belle cousine*.' Now, I am determined you shall see her at least; besides, you must do me a service with the countess. I have had the bad luck to be for some time out of favour with my aunt Josephine — some trumpery debts of mine they made a work about at the Tuilleries. Well, perhaps you could persuade Madame de Lacostellerie to take up my cause — she has great influence with the Empress, and can make her do what

she pleases; and if I must confess it, it was this brought me over to your quarters to-night — and I eat your supper, just to pass away time till you came back again. You'll not refuse me."

"Certainly not; but reflect for a moment, Tascher, and you will see that no man was ever less intended for a diplomate. It is only a few minutes since you laughed at my solitary habits, and hermit propensities."

"I've thought of all that, Burke, and am not a whit discouraged — on the contrary, you are the more likely to think of my affairs, because you have none of your own — and I don't know any one but yourself I should fancy to meet Pauline frequently, and on terms of intimacy."

"This, at least, is not a compliment," said I, laughing.

He shrugged his shoulders, and threw up his eyebrows, with a French expression, as though to say, it can't be helped — and then continued — "And now remember, Burke, I count on you, get me out of this confounded place. I'd rather be back at Toulon again, if need be — and as I shall not see you again before you leave, farewell. I'll send the letter for the countess early to-morrow."

We shook hands warmly, and parted, he to return to his quarters, and I to sit down beside my fire, and muse over the events that had just occurred — and think of Tascher himself, whose character had never been so plainly exposed to me before.

If Beauvais, with his hot-headed impetuosity, his mad devotion to the cause of the Legitimists, was a type of the followers of the Bourbons — so, in all the easy indifference and quiet selfishness of his nature,

was Tascher a specimen of another class of his countrymen; a class which, wrapped up in its own circle of egotistical enjoyments, believed Paris the only habitable spot of the whole globe. Without any striking traits of character, or any very decided vices, they led a life of pleasure and amusement, rendering every one, and every thing around them, so far as they were able, subservient to their own plans and wishes — and perfectly unconscious, the while, how glaring their selfishness had become — and how palpable, even to the least observant, was the self-indulgence they practised on every occasion. Without cleverness or tact enough to conceal their failings, they believed they imposed on others, because they imposed on themselves — just as the child deems himself unseen, when he closes his eyes.

Josephine's followers were, many of them, like this — and formed a striking contrast to the young men of the Napoleonite party, who, infatuated by the glorious successes of their chief, deemed the career of arms alone honourable. St. Cyr and the Polytechnique was the nursery of these; the principles instilled there, were perpetuated in after life — and however exaggerated their ideas of France and her destiny, their undoubted heroism and devotion, might well have palliated even heavier errors. It was in ruminating thus over the different characters of the few I had ever known intimately, that I came to think seriously on my own condition, which, for many a day before, I had rather avoided than sought to reflect on. I felt, as how many must have done, that the bond of a common country — the inborn patriotism of the native of the soil — is the great resource on which men fall back, when they devote themselves to the career of arms. That the

alien's position, disguise it how he will, is that of the mere mercenary. How can he identify himself with interests, on which he is but half-informed; or feel attachment to a land, wherein he has neither hearth nor home? In the very glory he wins, he can scarce participate. In a word, his is a false position — which no events, nor accidents of fortune, can turn to good account — and he must rest satisfied with a life of isolation, and estrangement.

I felt how readily, if I had been a Frenchman born, I could have excused and palliated to my conscience many things which now were matter of reproach. Aggressive war had lost its horrors in the glory of enlarged dominion — the greatness of France, and the honour of her arms, had made me readily forget the miseries entailed on other nations by her lust of conquest. But I, the stranger, the alien, had no part in the inheritance of glory; and personal ambition, what means it, save to stand high amongst those we once looked up to as superiors? For me, there were no traditions of a childhood passed amid great names, revered and worshipped; no early teachings beside the paternal hearth of illustrious examples. And yet there was one, who, although lost to me for ever, before whose eyes I would gladly seem to hold a high place — yes! could I but think that she had not forgotten me, would hear my name with interest — or feel one throb of pleasure, if I were spoken of with honour — I asked no more.

“A letter, *Monsieur le Capitaine*,” said my servant, as he deposited a package on my table. Supposing it was the epistle of which Tascher spoke, I paid but slight attention to it — when, by chance, I remarked

it was in General D'Auvergne's hand-writing. I opened it at once, and read as follows: —

"MY DEAR BURKE,

"No one ever set off for Paris without being troubled with commissions for his country friends, and you must not escape the ills of common humanity — happily for you, however, the debt is easily acquitted; I have neither undiscovered shades of silk to be matched, or impossible bargains to be effected. I shall simply beg of you to deliver with your own hand, the enclosed letter to its address at the Tuilleries — adding, if you think fit, the civil attentions of a visit.

"We shall both, in all likelihood, be much hurried when we meet to-morrow, for I also have received orders to march — so that I take the present opportunity to enclose you a check on Paris, for a trifle in advance of your pay — remembering too well, in my own aid-de-camp days, the dilatory habits of the war office, with new captains.

"Yours, ever dear Burke,

"D'AUVERGNE, Lieut.-General.

"Bivouack, 11 o'clock."

The letter of which he spoke had fallen on the table, where I now read the address — "*à Madame, la Comtesse D'Auvergne, née Comtesse de Meudon, dame d'honneur à S. M. L'Imperatrice.*" As I read these lines, I felt my face grow burning hot — my cheeks flushed up — and I could scarcely have been more excited, were I actually in her presence, to whom the letter was destined. The poor general's kind note, his cheque for eight thousand francs, lay there — I forgot them both,

and sat still, spelling over the letters of that name so woven in my destiny; I thought of the first night I had ever heard it — when a mere boy, I wept over her sorrows, and grieved for her whose fate was so soon to throw its shadow over my own. But, in a moment, all gave way before the one thought — I should see her again, speak to her, and hear her voice. It is true, she was the wife of another — but, as Marie de Meudon, our destinies were as wide apart; under no circumstances could she have been mine — nor did I ever dare to hope it. My love to her, for it was such, ardent and passionate — was more the devotion of some worshipper at a shrine, than an affection that sought return. The friendless soldier of fortune, poor, unknown, uncared for — how could he raise his thoughts to one, for whose hand the noblest and the bravest were suitors in vain? Yet, with all this — how my heart throbbed, to think that we should meet again. Nor was the thought less stirring that I felt — that even in the short interval of absence, I had won praise from him, for whom her admiration was equal to my own. With all the turmoil of my hopes and fears, I felt a rush of pleasure at my heart — and when I slept, it was to dream of happy days to come — and a future far brighter than the past.

My first thought, when morning broke, was to ride over to Reygern, to learn the fate of my wounded friends. On my way thither, I fell in with several officers, bound on a similar errand — for already the convent had become the great hospital, to which the sufferers were brought from every part of the camp. As we went along, I was much struck by the depression of spirit so remarkable every where — the battle

over, all the martial enthusiasm seemed to have evaporated. Many grumbled at the tiresome prospect of a winter in country quarters, or cantoned in the field; some regretted the briefness of the campaign; while others again complained, that to return to France after so little of active service, would only expose them to ridicule from their companions, who had seen Italy and Egypt.

"Spare your sorrows on that score, my young friends," said a colonel, who listened patiently to the complaints around him. "We shall not see the dome of the Invalides for some time yet. Except the *Compagnie d'élite*, I fancy few of us will figure on the Boulevards."

"There again," cried another; "I never heard any thing so unfair as that *Compagnie d'élite* — they have been, with two solitary exceptions, taken from the cavalry. Austerlitz was to be the day of honour for the infantry of France, said the bulletin."

"And so it was," interrupted a little dark-eyed major; "and I suppose his Majesty thought we had enough of it on the field, and did not wish to surfeit us with glory. But I ask pardon," said he, turning towards me, "Monsieur is, if I mistake not, named one of the *élite*."

As I replied in the affirmative, I observed all eyes turned towards me, but not with any kindly expression, far from it. I saw that there was a deliberate canvass of me, as though to see by my outward man, how I could possibly deserve such a favour.

"Can you explain to us, Monsieur," said the little major to me, "on what principle the *élite* were chosen? for we have a thousand contradictory reports in the camp — some say, by ballot — some, that it was only those

who never soiled their jackets in the affair of the other day, and looked fresh and smart."

A burst of laughter from the rest interrupted the major's speech — for its impertinence was quite sufficient to secure it many admirers.

"I believe, Sir," said I, angrily, "I can show you some reasons against the selection of certain persons." As I got thus far, an officer whispered something into the major's ear, who, with a roar of laughing, exclaimed, "A thousand pardons; ten thousand, *parbleu*; I didn't know you."

"It was Monsieur pinked François, the *Maître d'armes* — yes, yes; don't deny it," said he — as I made no reply whatever to a question I believed quite irrelevant to the occasion. "Don't deny it — that lunge over the guard was a thing to be proud of; and by Jove, you shall not practise it at my expense."

This speech excited great amusement among the party, who seemed to coincide perfectly with the reasoning of the speaker; while I myself remained silent, unable to decide whether I ought to be annoyed, or the reverse.

"Come, Monsieur," resumed the major, addressing me with courtesy, "I ask pardon for the liberty of my speech; by St. Denis, if all the *Compagnie d'élite* have the same skill of fence, I'll not question their appointment." The candour of the avowal was too much for my gravity, and I now joined in the mirth of his companions.

If I have mentioned so trivial an incident as this here, it is because I wish to mark, even thus passingly, a trait of French military life. The singular confession of a man, who regretted his impertinence because he

discovered his adversary was a better swordsman, would, under any other code, or in any other country, have argued poltroonery. Not so here; no one for a moment suspected his comrade's courage — nor could any circumstance arise to make it doubtful, save an actual instance of cowardice. The inequality of the combat was reason enough for not engaging in it. The odds were unfair, because duelling was like a game, where each party was to have an equal chance, and hence no shame was felt at declining a contest, where this inequality existed.

Such a system, it is obvious, could not have prevailed in communities where duelling was only resorted to in extreme cases; but here it was an every day occurrence, and often formed but a brief interval, scarce interrupting the current of an old friendship. Any resentful spirit, any long-continued dislike to the party with whom you once fought, would have been denounced as unofficer-like and ungenerous; and every day saw men walking arm in arm, in closest intimacy, who, but the morning before, stood opposed to each other's weapons.

I now perceived the truth of what Minette had once said, and which, at the time, I but imperfectly comprehended. "Maître François will be less troublesome in future, and you, Lieutenant, will have an easier life also."

"Halt there!" shouted a sentry, as we approached the narrow causeway that led up to the convent. We now discovered that, by a general order, no one was permitted to approach the hospital, save such as were provided with a leave from the medical staff. A bulletin of the deaths was daily published on the guard-house,

except which no other information was afforded of the condition of the wounded; and to this we turned eagerly, and with anxious hearts, lest we might read the name of some friend, lost for ever. I ran over, with a rapid glance, the list, where neither St. Hilaire, nor poor Pioche occurred, and then setting spurs to my horse, hurried back to my quarters at the top of my speed. When I arrived, the preparations for the departure of the *élite* were already in progress, and I had but time to make my few arrangements for the road, when the order came to join my comrades.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Paris in 1803.

A PORTION of the Luxembourg was devoted to the reception of the "Compagnie d'élite," for whom a household, on the most liberal scale, was provided — a splendid table maintained, and all that wealth and the taste of a voluptuous age could suggest, procured, to make their life one of daily magnificence and pleasure. Daru himself, the especial favourite of the Emperor, took the head of the table each day, to which generally some of the ministers were invited, while the *Moniteur* of every morning chronicled the festivities, giving *éclat* to the most minute circumstance, and making Paris re-echo to the glories of him, of whose fame they were but the messengers.

The most costly equipages — saddle-horses of great price — grooms in gorgeous liveries — all that could attract notice and admiration, were put in requisition; while ceremonies of pomp went forward day by day, and the deputation received in state the congratulatory visits of different departments of the government.

While thus this homage was paid to the semblance of Napoleon's glory, his progress through Germany was one grand triumphal procession. One day we read of his arrival at Munich, whither the Empress had gone to meet him — there, he was welcomed with the most frantic enthusiasm. He had restored to them their army almost without loss, and covered with laurels; he had elevated their elector to a throne, while he cemented the friendship between the two nations by the marriage of Eugene Beauharnois with the princess of Bavaria. Another account would tell us of sixteen thousand Russian prisoners on their way to France, accompanied by two thousand cannon taken from the Austrians. All that could excite national enthusiasm, and gratify national vanity, was detailed by the government press, and popular excitement raised to a higher pitch than in the wildest periods of the revolution.

Hourly was his arrival looked forward to with anxiety and impatience. Fêtes on the most splendid scale of magnificence were in preparation, and the public bodies of Paris held meetings to concert measures for his triumphal reception. At last, a telegraphic despatch announced his arrival at Strasbourg. He crossed the Rhine at the very place where, exactly one hundred days before, he passed over on his march against the Austrians — one hundred days of such glory as not even his career had equalled. Ulm and Austerlitz, vanquished Russia, and ruined Austria, the trophies of this brief space. Never had his genius shone with greater splendour — never had fortune shown herself more the companion of his destiny.

Each hour was now counted, and every thought turned to the day when he might be expected to arrive;

and on the evening of the 24th came the intelligence that the Emperor was approaching Paris. He had halted part of a day at Nancy to review some regiments of cavalry, and now might be expected in less than twenty-four hours. The next morning all Paris awoke at an early hour, when, what was the surprise and disappointment to see the great flag floating from the pavilion of the Tuilleries. His Majesty had arrived during the night, when, at once sending for the minister of finance, he proceeded, without taking a moment's repose, to examine into the dreadful crisis which threatened the bank of France, and the very existence of the government.

At eleven, the council of state were assembled at the Tuilleries; and at twelve, a proclamation, dispersed through Paris, announced that M. Molien was appointed minister, and M. Marbois was dismissed from his office. The rapidity of these changes, and the avoidance of all public homage by the Emperor, threw, for several days, a cast of gloom over the whole city, which was soon dissipated by the re-appearance of Napoleon, and the publication of that celebrated report by M. Champagny, in which the glories of France — her victories — her acquisitions in wealth, territory, and influence — were recited in terms whose adulation it would be now difficult to digest.

From that moment the festivities of Paris commenced, and with a splendour unsurpassed by any period of the empire. It was the Augustan era of Napoleon's life, in all that concerned the fine arts — for literature, unhappily, did not flourish at any time beneath his reign — Gérard and Gros, David, Ingres, and Isabey, committed to canvas the glories of the German campaigns;

and the capitulation of Ulm — the taking of Vienna — the passage of the Danube, and the field of Austerlitz, still live in the genius of these great painters.

The opera, too, under the direction of Cimerosa, had attained to an unwonted excellence; while Spontini and Boildieu, in their separate walks, gave origin to the school so distinctly that of the comic opera. Still, the voluptuous tastes of the day prevailed above all; and the ballet, and the strange conceptions of Nicolo, a Maltese composer, in which music, dancing, romance, and scenery, all figured, were the passion of the time.

Dancing was, indeed, the great art of the era. Vestris and Trénis were the great names in every saloon; and all the extravagant graces and voluptuous groupings of the ballet, were introduced into the amusements of society; even the taste in dress was made subordinate to this passion — the light and floating materials, which mark the figure and display symmetry, replacing the heavier and more costly robes of former times. The reaction to the stern puritanism of the republican age had set in, and secretly was favoured by Napoleon himself, who saw in all this extravagance and abandonment to pleasure, the basis of that new social state, on which he purposed to found his dynasty.

Never were the entertainments at the Tuilleries more costly — never was a greater magnificence displayed in all the ceremonial of state. The marshals of the empire were enjoined to maintain a style corresponding to their exalted position; and the reports of the police were actually studied, respecting such persons as lived in what was deemed, a manner unbefitting their means of expense.

Cambacérès and Fouché, Talleyrand and Murat, all maintained splendid establishments. Their dinners were given twice each week, and their receptions were almost every evening. If the Emperor conferred wealth with a liberal hand, so did he expect to see it freely expended. He knew well the importance of conciliating the affections of the *bourgeoisie* of Paris, and that by no other means could such an end be accomplished more readily, than by a lavish expenditure of money throughout all classes of society. This was alone wanting to efface every trace of the old republican spirit. The simple habits and uncostly tastes of the Jacobins were at once regarded as meannesses — their frugal and unpretending modes of life pronounced low and vulgar — and many who could have opposed a stout heart against the current of popular opinion, on stronger grounds, yielded to the insinuations and mockeries of their own class, and conformed to tastes, which eventually engendered opinions and even principles.

I ask pardon from my reader, for digressing from the immediate subject of my own career, to speak of topics which are rather the province of the historian, than a mere story-teller like myself: still, I should not be able to present to his view the picture of manners I desired, without thus recalling some features of that time, so pregnant with the fate of Europe, and the future destiny of France. And now to return.

Immediately on the Emperor's arrival, the Empress and her suite took their departure for Versailles, from whence it was understood they were not to return before the end of the month, for which time a splendid ball was announced at the Tuilleries. Unwilling to detain General D'Auvergne's letter so long, and unable,

from the position I occupied, to obtain leave of absence from Paris, I forwarded the letter to the Comtesse, and abandoned the only hope I had of meeting her once more. The disappointment from this source — the novelty of the circumstances in which I found myself — the fascinations of a world altogether strange to me — all conspired to confuse and excite me, and I entered into the dissipation of those around me, if not with all their zest, at least with as headlong a resolution to drown all reflection in a life of voluptuous enjoyment.

The only person of my own standing among the *Compagnie d'élite*, was a captain of the chasseurs of the guard, who, although but a few years my senior, had seen service in the Italian campaign. By family a Bourbonist, he joined the revolutionary armies when his relatives fled from France, and slowly won his steps to his present rank. A certain hauteur in his manner with men — an air of distance he always wore — had made him as little liked by them, as it usually succeeds in making a man popular with women, to whom the opposite seems at once a compliment. He was a man who had seen much of the world, and in the best society; gifted with a most fascinating address, when ever he pleased to exert it, and singularly good-looking, he was the *beau idéal* of the French officer of the highest class.

The Chevalier Duchesne and myself had travelled together for some days, without exchanging more than the ordinary civilities of distant acquaintance, when some accident of the road threw us more closely together, and ended by forming an intimacy, which, in our Paris life, brought us every hour into each other's society.

Stranger as I was in the capital, to me the ac-

quaintance was a boon of great price. He knew it thoroughly. In the gorgeous and stately salons of the Faubourg — in the guingettes of the Rue St. Denis — in the costly mansion of the modern banker, the new aristocracy of the land — or in the homely ménage of the shopkeeper of the Rue St. Honoré — he was equally at home, and, by some strange charm, had the entrée, too.

The same “sesame” opened to him the coulisse of the Opera, and the penetralia of the Français. In fact, he seemed one of those privileged people who are met with occasionally in life, in places the most incongruous, and with acquaintances the most opposite, yet never carrying the prestige of the one or the other, an inch beyond the precincts it belongs to.

Had he been wealthy, I could have accounted for much of this; for never was there a period when riches more abounded, nor when their power was more absolute; but he did not seem so. Although in no want of money, his retinue and simple style of living betrayed nothing beyond fair competence; neither, as far as I could perceive, did he incline to habits of extravagance — on the contrary, he was too apt to connect every display with vulgarity, and condemn, in his fastidiousness, the gorgeous splendour that characterised the period.

Such, without going further, did Duchesne appear to be, as we took up our quarters at the Luxembourg, and commenced an intimacy which each day served to increase.

“Well, thank heaven, this Vaudeville is over at last,” said he, as he threw himself into a large chair at my fire, and pitched his chapeau, all covered with gold and embroidery, into a far corner of the room.

We had just returned from Notre Dame, where the grand ceremonial of receiving the standards was held by the Senate, with all the solemnity of a high mass, and the most imposing observances.

“Vaudeville?” said I, turning round rapidly.

“Yes. What else can you call it? What, I ask you, had those poor decrepit Senators — those effeminate priests, in the costume of *béguines*, to do, with the eagles of a brave, but unfortunate army? In what way can you connect that incense and that organ, with the smoke of artillery, and the crash of mitraille? And lastly — was it like old Daru himself, to stand there, half crouching, beside some wretched half-palsied priest? But I feel heartily ashamed of myself, though I played but the smallest part in the whole drama.”

“Is it thus you can speak of the triumph of our army? — the glories —”

“You mistake me much. I only speak of that miserable mockery which converts our hard-won laurels into chaplets of artificial flowers; these displays are far beneath us, and would only become the victories of some national guard.”

“So then,” said I, half laughingly — “it is your republican gorge that rises against all this useless ceremonial.”

“You are the very first ever detected me in that guise,” said he, bursting into a hearty laugh. “But come — I’d wager you agree with me all this while. This was a very contemptible exhibition; and for my own part, I’d rather see the colours back again, with those poor fellows we chased at Austerlitz, than fluttering in the imbecile hands of dotage and bigotry.”

“Then I must say we differ totally. I like to think

of the warlike spirit nourished in a nation, by the contemplation of such glorious spoils. I am young enough to remember how the Invalides affected me —”

“When you took your Sunday walk there from the Polytechnique, two and two, with a blue ribbon round your neck, for being a good boy during the week. Oh, I know it all. Delicious times they were, with their souvenirs of wooden legs and plum-pudding. Happy fellow you must be, if the delusion can last this while.”

“You are determined it shall not continue much longer,” said I, laughing; “that is quite evident.”

“No. On the contrary, I should be but too happy to be your convert, instead of making you mine; but unfortunately, ‘*Sa Majesté, Empereur et Roi,*’ has taught me some smart lessons since I gave up mathematics, and I have acquired a smattering of his own policy, which is — to look after the substance, and leave the shadow — or the ‘*drapeau,*’ if you like it better — to whoever pleases.”

“I confess, however,” said I, “I don’t well understand your enthusiasm about war, and your indifference about its trophies. To me, the associations they suggest are pleasurable beyond any thing.”

“I think I remember something of that kind in myself formerly,” said he musing. “There was a time when the blast of a trumpet, or even the clank of a sabre, used to set my heart thumping. Happily, however, the organ has grown steeled against even more stirring sounds; and I listened to that salute to-day, fired as it was by that imposing body, the artillery of the ‘*garde nationale,*’ with an equanimity truly wonderful. Apropos, my dear Burke. Talk of heroism

and self-devotion as you will, but show me any thing to compare with the gallantry of those fellows we saw to-day on the 'Quai Voltaire' — a set of grocers, periwig-makers, umbrella and sausage-men, with portly paunches and spectacles, ramming down charges, sponging, loading, and firing real cannon. On my word of honour, it was fearful."

"They say his Majesty is very proud, indeed, of the national guard of Paris."

"Of course he is — look at them, and just think what must be the enthusiasm of men who will adopt a career so repugnant, not only to their fancy, but their very formation; remember, that he who runs yonder with a twenty-four pounder, never handled any thing heavier than a wig block; and that, the only charges of the little man beside him, have been made in his day-book. By St. Denis, the dromedary-guard we had in Egypt were more at home in their saddles, than the squadron who rode beside the archbishop's carriage."

"It is scarcely fair, after all," said I, half laughing, "to criticise them so severely; and the more, as I think you had some old acquaintances among them."

"Ha! you saw that — did you?" said he smiling. "No, by Jove, I never met them before; but that *confrérie* of soldiers — you understand — soon made us acquainted: and I saw one old fellow speaking to a very pretty girl, I guessed to be his daughter — and soon cemented a small friendship with him — here's his card."

"His card! Why — are you to visit him?"

"Better again — I shall dine there on Monday next. Let us see how he calls himself — 'Hippolyte Pierrot,

stay and corset maker to her Majesty the Empress, No. 22, Rue de Bac — third floor above the *entresol*. 'Diab!e, we 're high up. Unfortunately I am scarcely intimate enough to bring a friend."

"Oh, make no excuses on that head," said I, laughing, "I really have no desire to see Monsieur Hippolyte Pierrot's ménage. And now, what are your engagements for this evening? — are you for the opera?"

"I don't well know," said he, pausing, — Madame Caulaincourt receives, and of course expects to see our gay jackets in her salon any time before, or after, supper. Then there 's the Comtesse de Nevers — I never go there without meeting my tailor; the fellow 's a spy of the police, and a confectioner to boot; and he serves the ices, and reports the conversations in the Place Vendome, and that side of the Rue St. Honoré. I couldn't take a glass of lemonade without being dunned. Then, in the Faubourg — I must go in plain clothes, they would not let the 'livery of the usurper' pass the porter's lodge; besides they worry one with their enthusiastic joy or grief, as the last letter from England mentions whether the Comte D'Artois has eaten too many oysters, or found London beer too strong for him."

"From all which I guess that you are indisposed to stir."

"I believe that is about the fact. Truth is, Burke, there is only one *soirée* in all Paris I'd take the trouble to dress for this evening, and, strange enough, it's the only house where I don't know the people. He is a commissary-general, or a 'fournisseur' of some kind or other, of the army — always from home they say; with a wife, who was once, and a daughter, who is now,

exceeding pretty; keeps a splendid house, and, like an honest man, makes restitution of all he can cheat in the campaign, by giving good dinners in the capital. His Majesty, at the solicitation of the Empress, I believe, made him a Count — God's mercy it was not a King; and as they come from Guadeloupe, or Otaheite, no one disputes their right; besides this is not a time for such punctilio. This is all I know of them, for, unfortunately, they settled here since I joined the army."

"And the name?"

"Oh, a very plausible name, I assure you — Lacostellerie — Madame la Comtesse de Lacostellerie."

"By Jove, you remind me, I have letters for her — a circumstance I had totally forgotten, though it was coupled with a commission."

"A letter! — why nothing was ever so fortunate — don't lose a moment — you have just time to leave it, with your card, before dinner — you'll have an invitation for this evening at once."

"But I have not the slightest wish."

"No matter, *I* have, and you shall bring me."

"You forget," said I, mimicking his own words, "I am unfortunately not intimate enough."

"As to that," replied he, "there is a vast difference between the etiquette Rue de Bac, No. 22, three floors above the *entresol*, and the gorgeous salons of the Hotel Clichy, Rue Faubourg St. Honoré; ceremony has the advantage in the former by a height of three pair of stairs, not to speak of the *entresol*."

"But I don't know the people."

"Nor I."

"But how am I to present you?"

“Easily enough. Captain Duchesne, Imperial Guard; or, if you prefer it, I’ll do the honours for *you*.”

“With all my heart, then,” said I, laughing; and prepared to pay the visit in question.

CHAPTER XXV.

The “Hôtel de Clichy.”

DUCHESNE was correct in all his calculations. I had scarcely reached the Luxembourg when a valet brought me a card for the Comtesse’s soirée for that evening. It was accordingly agreed upon that we were to go together — I, as the invited, he, as my friend.

“All your finery, Burke, remember that,” said he, as we separated to dress. “The uniform of the *Compagnie d’élite* is as much a decoration in a salon, as a camelia, or a geranium.”

When he re-entered my room, half an hour later, I was struck by the blaze of orders and decorations with which his jacket was covered, while at his side there hung a magnificent *sabre d’honneur*, such as the Emperor was accustomed to confer on his most distinguished officers.

“You smile at all this bravery,” said he, wilfully misinterpreting my look of admiration, “but remember where we are going.”

“On the contrary,” interrupted I; “but it is the first time I knew you had the Cross of the Legion.”

“*Parbleu!*” said he, with an insolent shrug of his shoulders, “I had lent it to my hair-dresser, for a ball at the ‘Cirque;’ but here comes the carriage.”

While we drove along towards the Faubourg, I had time to learn some farther particulars of the people to whose house we were proceeding, and for my reader’s

information, may as well impart them here, with such other facts as I subsequently collected myself.

Like most of the salons of the new aristocracy, Madame Lacostellerie's received people of every section of party, and every class of political opinion. Standing equally aloof from the old régime and the members of the Jacobin party, her receptions were a kind of neutral territory, where each could come without compromise of dignity; for already, except among the most starched adherents of the Bourbons, few of whom remained in France, there was a growing spirit to side with the Napoleonists, in preference to the revolutionary section; while the latter, with all their pretensions to simplicity and primitive tastes, felt no little pride in mixing with the very aristocracy they so loudly inveighed against.

Besides all this, wealth had its prestige. Never, in the palmiest days of the royalty, were entertainments of greater splendour; and the Legitimists, however disposed to be critical on the company, could afford to be just regarding the "*cuisine*;" the luxury of these modern dinners eclipsing the most costly displays of former times, where hereditary rank and ancient nobility contributed to adorn the scene. And, lastly, the admixture of every grade and class extended the field of conversational agreeability — throwing in new elements, and eliciting new features, in a society where peers, actors, poets, bankers, painters, soldiers, speculators, journalists, and adventurers, were confusedly mixed up together, making, as it were, a common fund of their principles and their prejudices, and starting anew in life, with what they could seize in the scramble.

After following the long line of carriages for above an hour, we at last turned into a large court-yard, lit up almost to the brightness of day. Here the equipages of many of the ministers were standing, a privilege accorded to them above the other guests. I recognised, among the number, the splendid liveries of Decres, and the stately carriage of Talleyrand, whose household always proclaimed itself as belonging to a "seigneur" of the oldest blood of France, the most perfect type of a high-bred gentleman. Our progress from the vestibule to the stairs was a slow one. The double current of those pressing up and downwards delayed us long; and at last we reached a spacious antechamber, where even greater numbers stood awaiting their turn, if happily it should come, to move forward.

While here, the names of those announced conveyed to us a fair impression of the whole company. Among the first was Le General Junot — Berthollet the celebrated chemist — Lafayette — Monges — Daru — Count de Mailles, a Legitimist noble — David the regicide — the ambassador of Prussia — M. Pasquier — Talma. Such were the names we heard following in quick succession, when suddenly an avenue was opened by a master of the ceremonies before me, who read from my card the words —

"Le Capitaine Burke, officier d'élite — Le Chevalier Duchesne, présenté par lui."

And, advancing within the door-way, I found myself opposite a very handsome woman, whose brilliant dress and blaze of diamonds concealed any ravages time might have made upon her beauty.

She was conversing with the arch-chancellor, Cam-

bacérès, when my name was announced, and, turning rapidly round, touched my arm with her bouquet, as she said, with a most gracious smile —

“I am but too much flattered to see you on so short an invitation; but M. de Tascher’s note led me to hope I might presume so far — your friend, I believe.”

“I have taken the great liberty —”

“Indeed, Madame la Comtesse,” said Duchesne, interrupting, “I must exculpate my friend here. This intrusion rests on my own head, and has no other apology than my long-cherished wish to pay my homage to the most distinguished ornament of the Parisian world.”

As he spoke, the quiet flow of his words, and the low deferential bow with which he accompanied them, completely divested his speech of its tone of gross flattery, and merely made it seem a very fitting and appropriate expression.

“This would be a very high compliment, indeed,” replied Madame de Lacostellerie, with a flush of evident pleasure on her cheek, “had it even come from one less known than the Chevalier Duchesne. I hope the Duchesse de Montserrat is well — your aunt, if I mistake not.”

“Yes, Madame,” said he, “in excellent health. It will afford her great pleasure when I inform her of your polite inquiry.”

Another announcement now compelled us to follow the current in front, which I was but well content to do, and escape from an interchange of fine speeches, of whose sincerity, on one side at least, I had very strong misgivings.

"So, then, the Comtesse is acquainted with your family," said I in a whisper.

"Who said so?" replied he, laughing.

"Did she not ask after the Duchesse de Montserrat?"

"And then?"

"And didn't you promise to convey her very kind message?"

"To be sure I did; but are you simple enough to think that either of us were serious in what we said? Why, my dear friend, she never saw my aunt in her life; nor, if I were to hint at her inquiry for her, to the duchesse, am I certain it would not cost me something like a half-million of francs the old lady has left me in her will. On my word, I firmly believe she'd never forgive it. You know little what these people of the 'Vieille roche,' as they call themselves, are like. Do you see that handsome fellow yonder, with a star on a blue cordon?"

"I don't know him, but I see he's a Marshal of France."

"Well, I saw that same aunt of mine rise up and leave the room, because *he* sat down in her presence."

"Oh! that was intolerable."

"So, she deemed his insolence — come, move on; they're dancing in the next saloon;" and, without saying more, we pushed through the crowd in the direction of the music.

It is only by referring to the sensations experienced by those who see a ballet at the opera for the first time, that I can at all convey my own on entering the "Salle de danse." My first feeling was that of absolute shame. Never before had I seen that affectation of stage-costume, which then was the rage in society.

The short and floating jupe — formed of some light and gauzy texture, which, even where it covered the figure, betrayed the form and proportions of the wearer — was worn low on the bosom and shoulders, and attached at the waist by a ribbon, whose knot hung negligently down in seeming disorder. The hair fell in long and floating masses loose upon the neck, waving in free tresses with every motion of the figure, and adding to that air of “abandon” which seemed so studiously aimed at; but more than any thing in mere costume was the look and expression in which a character of languid voluptuousness was written, and made to harmonize with the easy grace of their floating movements, and sympathize with gestures full of passionate fascination.

“Now Burke,” said Duchesne, as he threw his eyes over the room, “shall I find a partner for you? for I believe I know most of the people here. That pretty blonde yonder, with the diamond buckles in her shoes, is Mademoiselle de Rancy, with a dowry of some millions of francs. What say you to pushing your fortune there? Don’t forget the Officier d’Elite is a trump card just now; and there’s no time to lose, for there will soon be a new deal.”

“Not if she had the throne of France in reversion,” said I, turning away in disgust from a figure, which, though perfectly beautiful, outraged at every movement, that greatest charm of womanhood, her inborn modesty.

“Ah, then, you don’t fancy a blonde,” said he, carelessly — whether wilfully misunderstanding me or not, I could not say. “Nor I, neither,” added he. “There, now, is something far more to my taste. Is she not a lovely girl?”

She to whom he now directed my attention, was standing at the side of the room, and leaning on her partner's arm — her head slightly turned, so that we could not see her features; but her figure was actually faultless. Her's was not one of those gossamer shapes which flitted around and about us, balancing on tip-toe, or gracefully floating with extended arms. Rather strongly built than otherwise, she stood with the firm foot and the straight ankle of a marble statue: her arms well rounded, hung easily from her full, wide shoulders, while her head, slightly thrown back, was balanced on her neck with an air at once dignified and easy. Her dress well suited the character of her figure: it was entirely of black, covered with a profusion of deep black lace — the jupe looped up in Andalusian fashion, to display the leg, whose symmetry was perfect. Even her costume, however, had something about it too theatrical for my taste; but there was a stamp of firmness, "*fierté*," even in her carriage and her attitude, that at once showed her's was no vulgar desire of being remarkable, but the womanly consciousness of being dressed as became her. She suddenly turned her head around, and we both exclaimed in the same breath, "how lovely!" Her features were of that brilliant character only seen in southern blood; eyes large, black, and lustrous, fringed with lashes that threw their shadow on the very cheek; full lips, curled with an air of almost saucy expression, while the rich, olive tint of her transparent skin was scarce coloured with the pink flush of exercise, and harmonized so perfectly with the proud repose of her countenance.

"She must be Spanish — that's certain," said Duchesne. "No one ever saw such an instep come from

this side the Pyrenees; and those eyes have got their look of sleepy wickedness from Moorish blood. But here comes one will tell us all about her."

This was the Baron de Treve, a withered-looking, dried-up old man, rouged to the eyes, and dressed in the extravagance of the last fashion — the high collar of his coat rising nearly to the back of his head, as his deep cravat in front entirely concealed his mouth, and formed a kind of barrier around his features.

As Duchesne addressed him, he stopped short, and assuming an attitude of great intended grace, raised his glass slowly to his eye, and looked towards the lady.

"Ah! the Senorina — don't you know *her*? Why, where have you been, my dear Chevalier? Oh! I forgot. You've been in Austria, or Russia, or some barbarous place or other. She is the belle, *par excellence*. Nothing else is talked of in Paris."

"But her name? Who is she?" said Duchesne impatiently.

"Mademoiselle de Lacostellerie, the daughter of the house," said the Baron, completely overcome with astonishment at our ignorance; "and you, not to know this — you, of all men living. Why," he continued, dropping his voice to a lower key, "there never was such a fortune. Mines of rubies and emeralds; continents of coffee, rice, and sandal-wood; spice islands, and sugar plantations, to make one's mouth water."

"By Jove, Baron, you seem somewhat susceptible yourself."

"I had my thoughts on the subject," said he, with a half-sigh; "but, Helas! there are so many ties to be broken — so many tender chains one must snap asunder —"

"I understand," said Duchesne, with an air of well-assumed seriousness. "The thing was impossible. Now, then, what say you to assist a friend?"

"You — yourself, do you mean?"

"Of course, Baron — no other."

"Come this way," said the old man, taking him by the arm, and leading him along to another part of the room, while Duchesne, with a sly look at me, followed.

While I stood, awaiting his return, my thoughts became fixed on Duchesne himself, of whose character, I never felt free from my misgivings. The cold indifference he manifested on ordinary occasions to every thing and every body, I now saw could give way to strong impetuosity; but even this might be assumed also. As I pondered thus, I had not remarked that the dance was concluded; and already the dancers were proceeding towards their seats, when I heard my name uttered beside me — Capitaine Burke. I turned; it was the Countess herself, leaning on the arm of her daughter.

"I wish to present you to my daughter," said she, with a courteous smile, "the college friend and brother-officer of your cousin Tascher, Pauline."

The young lady courtesied with an air of cold reserve — I bowed deeply before her, while the Countess continued —

"We hope to have the pleasure of seeing you frequently during your stay in Paris, when we shall have a better opportunity of making your acquaintance."

As I expressed my sense of this politeness, I turned to address a few words to Mademoiselle; and requesting to have the honour of dancing with her, she looked at

me with an air of surprise, as though not understanding my words, when suddenly the Countess interposed —

“I fear that my daughter’s engagements have been made long since; but another night —”

“I will hope —” but before I could say more, the Countess addressed another person near her, and Made-moiselle, turning her head superciliously away, did not deign me any further attention — so that, abashed and awkward at so unfavourable a *début* in the gay world, I fell back, and mixed with the crowd. As I did so, I found myself among a group of officers, one of whom was relating an anecdote, just then current in Paris, and which I mention merely, as illustrating in some measure the habits of the period.

At the levee of the Emperor on the morning before, an old general of brigade advanced to pay his respects, when Napoleon observed some drops of rain glistening on the embroidery of his uniform. He immediately turned towards one of his suite, and gave orders to ascertain by what carriage the general had arrived. The answer was, that he had come in a “fiacre,” a hired vehicle, which, by the rules of the court, was not admitted within the court of the Tuilleries, and thus he was obliged to walk above one hundred yards, before he could obtain shelter.

The old officer, who knew nothing of the tender solicitude of the Emperor, was confounded with astonishment to observe at his departure a handsome calèche, and two splendid horses at his service.

“Whose carriage is this?” said he.

“Yours, Monsieur le Général.”

“And the servant, and the horses!”

“Yours, also! His Majesty has graciously been

pleased to order them for you, and desires you will remember that the sum of six thousand francs will be deducted from your pay, to meet the cost of the equipage, which the Emperor deems so befitting your rank in the service."

"It is thus," said the narrator, "the Emperor would enforce that liberality on others, he so eminently displays himself. The spoils of Italy and Austria are destined — not to found a new noblesse, but to enrich the bourgeoisie of this good city of Paris. I say, Edward, is not that Duchesne yonder? I thought he was above patronising the salons of a mere commissary-general."

"You don't know the chevalier," replied the other. "No game flies too high or too low for his mark. Depend upon it, he's not here for nothing."

"If Mademoiselle be the object," said a third, "I'll swear he shall have no rivalry on my side. By Jove! I'd rather face a charge of Hulans, than speak to her."

"If thou wert a Marshal of France, Claude, thou wouldst think differently."

"If I were a Marshal of France," repeated he, with energy, "I'd rather marry Minette, the vivandière of ours."

"And no bad choice either," broke in a large heavy-looking officer; "there is but one objection to such an arrangement."

"And that — if I might ask —"

"Simple enough. She wouldn't have you."

The young man endeavoured to join in the laugh this speech excited among the rest, though it was evident he felt ill at ease from the ridicule.

"A thousand pardons, my dear Burke," said Du-

chesne, at this moment, as he slipped his arm through mine; "but I thought I should have been in need of your services a few minutes ago."

"Ah, how?"

"Move a little aside, and I'll tell you. I wished to ask Mademoiselle to dance, and approached her for the purpose. She was standing with a number of people, all strangers to me, at the door-way yonder—Dobretski, that Russian prince, the only man I knew amongst them. A very chilling — 'Engaged, Sir!' was the answer of the lady, to my first request. The same reply met my second and third — when the Russian, as if desirous to increase the awkwardness of my position, interposed with, 'And the fourth set, Mademoiselle dances with me.' 'In that case,' said I, 'I may fairly claim the fifth.'

"'On what grounds, Sir,' said she, with a look of easy impertinence. "'The Emperor's orders, Mademoiselle,' said I proudly.

"'Indeed, Sir! — May I ask, how and when?'"

"Austerlitz, December 2. — The order of four o'clock, dated from Reygern, says — 'The Imperial Guard will follow closely on the track of the Russians. Signed — NAPOLEON.'

"'In that case, Sir,' said she, 'I cannot dispute his Majesty's orders. I shall dance with you the fifth.'"

"And the Russian. What said he?"

"Ma foi! I paid no attention to him — for, as Mademoiselle moved off with her partner, I strolled away in search of you."

If I was amused at this recital of the chevalier, I could not avoid feeling picqued at the greater success

he had than myself — for still, the chilling reception I had met with was rankling in my mind.

“Let us move away from this quarter,” said Duchesne, “here we have got ourselves among a knot of old campaigners, with their stupid stories of Cairo and Acre, Alexandria and the Adige. By Jove! if any thing would make me a Legitimist, it is my disgust at those confounded narratives about Kleber and Desaix. The Emperor himself does not despise the time of the revolution, more heartily than I do. Come — there’s bouillotte yonder. Let us go, and win some pieces. I feel I’m in vein — and even to lose, would be better than listen to these people. It is only a few minutes ago I was hunted away from Madame de Muraire by old Berthollet, who is persuading her that her diamonds are but charcoal, and that a necklace is only fit to roast an ortolan. This comes of letting savants into society — decidedly, they had much better taste in the time of the monarchy.”

It was with some difficulty we succeeded in approaching the bouillotte-table, where, to judge from the stakes, very high play was going forward. Duchesne was quickly recognised among the players, who made place for him among them. I soon saw that he was not mistaken in supposing he was in luck; every coup was successful, and while he continued to win time after time, the heap of gold grew greater, till it covered the part of the table before him.

“Most certainly, Burke,” said he, in a whisper, “this is a strong turn of fortune, who, being a woman, won’t long be of the same mind. Five thousand francs,” cried he, throwing the billet de banque carelessly before him, while he turned to resume what he was saying to

me. Were I in action now, I'd win the bâton de Maréchal. I feel it. 'There 's always an innate sense of luck, when it means to be steady."

"The Chevalier Duchesne — the Chevalier Duchesne!" was repeated from voice to voice, outside the circle, "Mademoiselle de Lacostellerie is waiting to waltz with you."

"A thousand pardons," said he, rising. "Burke, continue my game, while I try, if I can't push fortune the whole way."

So saying, and without listening to my excuses about ignorance of play, he pressed me into his seat, and pushed his way through the crowd to join the dancers.

It was only when the players asked me if I intended to go on, that I was aware of the position in which I found myself. I knew little more of the game than I had learned in looking over the table, but I was aware of the strict etiquette in all the play of society, which enjoins a revenge to every loser, so that I continued to bet and stake for Duchesne, as I had seen him do already — not, however, with such fortune. He had scarcely left the table, when luck changed, and now I saw his riches decreasing even more rapidly than they had been accumulated. At last, after a long run of ill-fortune, when I had staked a very large sum on the board, just as the banker was about to begin, I changed my mind, and withdrew half of it.

"No, no; let it stay," whispered a voice in my ear; "the sooner this is over, the better."

I turned — it was Duchesne himself, who for some time had been seated behind my chair, and looking on at the game.

Fleeting as was the glance I had of his features, I fancied they were somewhat paler than usual. Could this be from the turn of fortune? — But no. I watched him now, and I perceived that he never even looked at the game. At last, I staked all that remained in one coup, and lost. When drawing forth my own purse, I was about to make another bet — “No, no, Burke,” whispered he in my ear, “I was only waiting for this moment. Let us come away now. I rise as I sat down, Messieurs,” he said gaily, while he added, in a lower tone — “*Sauf l’honneur.*”

“Have you had enough of gaiety for one night?” said he, as he drew my arm within his. “Shall we turn homewards?”

“Willingly,” said I; for somehow I felt chagrined and vexed at my ill luck, and was angry with myself for playing.

“Come along then; this door will bring us to the stairs.”

As we passed along hastily through the crowd, I saw that a young officer, in a hussar uniform, whispered something in Duchesne’s ear, to which he quickly replied — “Certainly;” and as he spoke again in the same low tone, Duchesne answered — “Agreed, Sir,” with a courteous smile, and a look of much pleasure.

“Well, Burke,” said he, turning to me, “these are about the most splendid salons in Paris — I think I never saw more perfect taste — I certainly must thank you for being my chaperon here.”

“You forget, Duchesne, the Duchesse de Montserrat, it seems,” said I, laughing.

“By Jove, and so I had,” said he; “yet the initiative lay with you. How the termination may be, is

another matter," added he, in a mumbling voice, not intended to be heard.

"At all events," said I, puzzled what to say, and feeling I should say something; "I am happy your Russian friend took no notice of your speech."

"And why?" said he, with a peculiar smile—"and why?"

"I abhor a duel, in the first place."

"But, my dear boy, that speech smacks much more of the École de Jésuites, than of St. Cyr. Don't let any one less your friend than I am, hear you say so."

"I care not who may hear it. Necessity may make me meet an adversary in single combat; but as to acting the cold-blooded part of bystander—as to being the witness of my friend's crime, or his own death—"

"Come, come—when you exchange the Dolman for an Alb, I'll listen to this from you, if I can listen to it from any one; but happily now we have no time for more morality, for here comes the carriage."

Chatting pleasantly about the soirée and its company, we rolled along towards our quarters, and parted with a cordial shake of the hand for the night.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A "Salle de police."

WHEN I entered the breakfast-room the following morning, I found Duchesne stretched before the fire, in an easy chair, busily engaged in reading the *Moniteur* of that day where a long list of imperial "ordonnances" nearly filled three columns.

"Here have I been," said he, "conning over this catalogue of princely favour these twenty minutes, and yet cannot discern one word of our well-beloved cousins

Captains Burke and Duchesne; and yet there seems to be a hail-storm of promotions. Some of them have got grand duchies — some, principalities — some, have the cross of the Legion — and, here, by Jove, are some endowed with wives. Now that his Majesty has taken to christening and marrying, I suppose we shall soon see him administering all the succours of holy church. Have you much interest in hearing that Talleyrand is to be called Prince of Benevente, and Murat is now Grand Duke of Berg; that Sebastiani is to be married to Mademoiselle de Coigny; and Monsieur Decazes, fils de M. Decazes, has taken some one else to wife. Oh dear, oh dear! It's all very tiresome, and not even the fête of St. Napoleon —”

“Of whom?” said I, laughing.

“St. Napoleon — *parbleu!* — it's no joking matter, I assure you — here is the letter of the cardinal legate to the archbishops and bishops of France, commanding that the first Sunday in the August of each year should be set apart to celebrate his saintship, with an account of the processions to take place, and various plenary indulgences to the pious who shall present themselves on the occasion. Fouché could tell you the names of some people who bled freely, to get rid of all this trumpery; and, in good sooth, it's rather hard, if we could not endure St. Louis, to be obliged to tolerate St. Napoleon — Saints, like Bourdeaux wine, being all the more palatable, when they have age to mellow them. I could forgive any thing, however, but this system of forced marriages; it smacks too much of old Frederick for my taste; and one cannot always have the luck of your friend General D'Auvergne.”

I felt my cheek grow burning hot at the words;

Duchesne did not notice my confusion, but continued: — “And yet, of all the ill-assorted unions for which his sainted Majesty will have to account hereafter, that was unquestionably the most extraordinary.”

“But I have heard, and I believe it too, that the marriage was not of the Emperor’s making; it was purely a matter of liking.”

“Come, come, Burke,” said he laughing, “you will not tell me that the handsomest girl at the court, with a large dowry, an ancient name, and every advantage of position, marries an old weather-beaten soldier, the senior officer of her own father, once, of her own free-will and choice. The thing is absurd. No, no. These are the imperial recompenses, when grand duchies are scarce, and confiscations few. The Emperor does not travel for nothing: he brought back with him from Egypt something beside his Mameluke guard — that clever trick the Pachas have of providing a favourite with an ex-sultana. There, there — don’t look so angrily: we shall both be marshals of France one of these days, and that may reconcile one to a great deal.”

“You are determined to owe nothing of your promotion to a blind devotion to Napoleon — that’s certain,” said I, annoyed at the tone of insolent disparagement in which he spoke.

“You are right — perfectly right there,” replied he, in a quiet tone of voice. “No man would rather hug himself up in an illusion, if he could but make it minister to his pleasure or his enjoyment; but when it does neither — when the material is so flimsy as to be seen through at every minute, I throw it from me as a worthless garment, unfit to wear.”

"Can you, then, deem Napoleon's glory such?"

"Of course, to me, it is. How am I a sharer in his triumphs, save as the charger that marches in the cavalcade? You don't perceive that I, as the descendant of an old loyalist family, would have fared far better with the Bourbons, from reasons of blood and kindred; and a hundred times better with the Jacobins, from very recklessness."

"How then came it —"

"I will spare you the question. I neither liked emigration, nor the guillotine, and preferred the slow suffering of *ennui*, to the quick death of the scaffold. There has been but one career in France for many a day past. I adopted it, as much from necessity as choice — I followed it, more from habit than either."

"But you cannot be insensible to the greatness of your country, nor her success in arms."

"Nor am I; but these things are a small ingredient in patriotism. You, the stranger, share with us all our triumphs in the field. But the inherent features of a nation — the distinctive traits of which every son of the soil feels proud — where are they now? What is France to me more than to you? One half my kindred are exiled — of those who remain, many regard me as a renegade. Their properties confiscated, themselves suspected, what tie binds them to this country? You are not more an alien, here, than I am."

"And yet, Duchesne, you shed your blood freely for this same cause you condemn. You charged the Pratzen, some days ago, with four squadrons, against a whole column of Russian cavalry."

"Ay — and would again to-morrow, boy. Had you been a gambler I needn't have told you, that it is the

game, not the stake, that interests the real gamester. But come, do not fancy I want to make you a convert to these tiresome theories of mine. What say you to the pretty Mademoiselle Pauline? — did you admire her much?"

"She is unquestionably very handsome; but, if I must confess it, her manner towards me was too ungracious to make me loud in her praise."

"I like that, I vow," said Duchesne, "that saucy air has an indescribable charm for me. I don't know if it is not the very thing which pleases me most about her. She has been spoiled by flattery and admiration; for her beauty and her fortune are prizes in the great wheel. And that she is aware of the fact is nothing wonderful, considering that she hears it repeated every evening of her life, by every rank in the service, from a marshal of France down to — a captain in the *chasseurs-à-cheval*," said he, laughing.

"Who probably was one of the last to tell her so," said I, looking at him slyly.

"What have we here?" said he suddenly, without paying any attention to my remark, as he again took up the *Moniteur* — "It is rumoured that the Russian Prince, Dobretski, was dangerously wounded this morning in an affair of honour; the names of the other party and the seconds are still unknown; but the efforts of the police, stimulated by the express command of the Emperor, will, it is to be hoped, succeed in discovering them ere long."

"Is not that the name of your Russian friend of last night, Duchesne?"

"Yes, and the same person too, formerly Russian minister at Madrid, and latterly residing on his parole

at Paris," continued he, reading from the paper, "'The very decided part his Majesty has taken against the practice of duelling, is strengthened on this occasion by a recent order of council respecting the prisoners on parole.' *Diab!e!* Burke, what a scrupulous turn Napoleon seems to have taken in regard to these Cossacks. And here follows a long list of witnesses, who have seen nothing, and suspicious circumstances, that occur every morning in the week, without remark. After all, I don't think the empire has advanced us much on the score of police — the same threadbare jests, the same old practical jokes amused the bourgeoisie in the time of Louis XIV."

"I don't clearly understand your meaning."

"It is simply this; that every government of France, from Pepin downwards, has understood the value of throwing public interest from time to time on a false scent, and to this end has maintained a police. Now, if for any cause his Majesty thought proper to incarcerate that Russian prince in the Temple, or *La Force*, the affair would cause a tremendous sensation in Paris, and soon would ring over the whole of Germany, and the rest of Europe, with every variation of despotism, tyranny, and all that, attached to it, long before any advantages to be derived from the step could be realized. Whereas see the effect of an opposite policy. By this report of a duel, for instance — I don't mean to assert it false, here — the whole object is attained, and an admirable subject of imperial praise obtained into the bargain. Governments have learned wisdom from the cuttle-fish, and can muddy the water on their enemies at the moment of danger. I should not be surprised if the affairs of the bank looked badly this morning."

"It is evident, then, you disbelieve the whole statement about the duel."

"My dear friend," said he, smiling, "who is there in all Paris, from Mont Martre to St. Denis, believes, or disbelieves any one thing in the times we live in? Have we not trusted so implicitly for years past to the light of our reason, that we have actually injured our eye-sight with its brilliancy. Little reproach, indeed, to our minds, when our very senses seem to mislead us — when one sees the people who enter the Tuilleries now, with embroidered coats, who, in our fathers' days, never came nearer to it than the Place de Carrousel. *Hélas!* it's no time for incredulity, that's certain. But to conclude," said he, turning to the paper once more — "The *commissaires de police* throughout Paris have received orders to spare no effort to unravel the mystery, and detect the other parties in this unhappy affair.' Military tribunal — prisoners on parole — rights of hospitality — honour of France — and the old peroration — the usual compliment on the wisdom which presides over every department of state. How weary I do become of all this. Let your barber puff his dye for the whiskers, or your boot-maker the incomparable effulgence of his blacking, the thing is in keeping, no one objects to it. I don't find fault with my old friend Pigault Lebrun, if he now and then plays the critic on himself, and shows the world the beauties they neglectfully slurred over. But, Burke, have you ever seen a *Bureau de Police*?"

"Never; and I have the greatest curiosity to do so."

"Come, then, I'll be your guide; the *commissaire* of this quarter has a very extended jurisdiction, stretching away towards the Bois de Boulogne; and if there be

any thing in this report, he is certain to know it; and assuredly, no other topic will be talked of till to-morrow evening, for it's not opera night, (and Talma does not play either.)"

I willingly accepted this proposition; and when our breakfast was over, we mounted our horses, and set out for the place in question.

"If the forms of justice where we are now going," said Duchesne, "be divested of much of their pomp and ceremony, be assured of one thing, it is not at the expense of the more material essence. Of all the police tribunals about Paris, this obscure den in the Rue de Dix Sous is the most effective. Situated in a quarter where crime is as rife as fever in the Pontine Marshes, it has become acquainted with the haunts and habits of the lowest class in Paris — the lowest class, probably, in any city of Europe. Watching with parental solicitude, it tracks the criminal from his first step in vice, to his last deed in crime; from his petty theft, to his murder. Knowing the necessities to which poverty impels men, and studying with attention the impulses that grow up amid despair and hunger, it sees motives, through a mist of intervening circumstances that would baffle less subtle observers — and can trace the tortuous windings of crime, where no other sight could find the clue. Is it not strange, to think with what ingenuity men will investigate the minute anatomy of vice, and how little they will do to apply this knowledge to its remedy? Like the surgeon, enamoured of his operating skill, he would rather exhibit his dexterity on the amputation, than his science in saving the limb. Such is the Bureau of the Police in the poorer quarters. In the more fashionable ones it takes a higher flight,

amusing the world with its scenes, alternately humorous and pathetic, it forms a kind of feature in the literature of the period, and is the only reading of thousands. In these places the *commissaire* is usually a *bon vivant*, and a wit; despising the miserable function of administering the law, he takes his seat upon the bench, to cap jokes with the witnesses, puzzle the complainant, and embarrass the prisoner. To the reporters, alone, is he civil; and in return, his poor witticisms appear in the morning papers, with the usual 'loud laughter,' that never existed, save in type."

As we thus chatted, we entered a quarter of dirty and narrow streets, inhabited by a poor-looking, squalid population — the women, with little to mark their sex in their coarse heavy countenances, wore coloured kerchiefs on their heads, in lieu of a cap, and were, for the most part, without shoes or stockings. The men, a brutalized, stupid race, sat smoking in the door-ways — scarcely lifting their eyes as we passed; or some were eating a coarse morsel of black rye bread, which, by their eagerness in devouring it, seemed an unusual delicacy.

"You scarcely believed there was such poverty in Paris," said he, "but this is by no means the worst of the quarter. Though M. de Champagny, in his late report, makes no mention of these 'signs of prosperity,' we are now entering the region where, even in noon day, the passage is deemed perilous — but the number of police agents on duty to-day, will make the journey a safe one."

The street we entered at the moment consisted of a mass of tall houses, almost falling from decay and neglect; scarcely a window remained in many of them —

while in front, a row of miserable booths, formed of rude planks, narrowed the passage to a mere path, scarce wide enough for three people abreast. There, vice of every description and drunkenness, waited not for the dark hours to shroud them, but came forth in the sunlight — the ruffian shouts of intoxication mingling with the almost maniacal laugh of misery, or the reckless chorus of some degrading song. Half-naked wretches leaned from the windows as we passed along, some staring in stupid wonderment at our appearance; others saluting us with mockery and grimace — or even calling out to us in the slang dialect of the place.

“Yes,” said Duchesne, as he saw the expression of horror and disgust the scene impressed on me, “here are the rotting seeds of revolutions, putrifying, to germinate at some future day. Starvation and vice, misery, even to despair, inhabit every den around you. The furious and blood-thirsty wretch of '92, the Chouan, the Jacobite, the escaped galley-slave, the untaken murderer, are here, side by side — crime their great bond of union. To this place men come for an assassin, or a false witness, as to a market. Such are the wrecks, the retiring waves of a revolution have left us. So long as the trade of blood lasted, openly, like vultures, they fattened on it; but once, the reign of order restored, they were driven to murder and outrage as a livelihood.”

While he was speaking, we approached a narrow arched passage, within which a flight of stone steps arose. “We dismount here,” said he; at the same moment a group of ragged creatures, of every age, surrounded us to hold our horses, not noticing the orderly who rode at some distance behind us. I followed

Duchesne up the steps, and along a gloomy corridor, to a little court-yard, where several dismounted gendarmes were standing in a circle, chatting. Passing through this, we entered a dirty, mean-looking house, around the door of which several people were collected, some of whom saluted the chevalier as he came up.

"Who are these fellows?" said I, "they seem to know you."

"Oh! nothing but the common police spies," said he, carelessly; "the fellows who lounge about the cabarets, and the low gambling houses. But, here comes one of higher mark." As he spoke, he laid his hand on the arm of a tall, powerful-looking man, in a blouse — he wore immense whiskers, and a great beard, descending far below his chin. "Ah! Bocquin, what have we got going forward to-day? I came to show a young friend here the interior of your *salle*."

"Monsieur le Capitaine, your most obedient," said the man, in a deep voice, as he removed his casquette, and bowed ceremoniously to us; "and yours, also, Monsieur," added he, turning to me. "Why, there's nothing to speak of save that duel, Capitaine."

"Come, come, Bocquin, no nonsense with me. What was that story got up for?"

"Ah! you mistake there," said Bocquin. "By Jove! there's a man badly wounded — shot through the neck — and no one to tell a word about it. No seconds present — the thing done quite privately — the wounded man left at his own door, and the other off — heaven knows where."

"And you believe this tale, Bocquin," said Duchesne superciliously.

"Believe it! — that I do. I have been to see the

place where the man lay; and, by tracking the wheel-marks, I have discovered they came from the Champs Elysées. The cabriolet, too, was a private one — no fiacre has got so narrow a tire to the wheel.”

“Closely followed up — eh, Burke?” said the chevalier, turning towards me with a smile of admiration at his sagacity. “Go on, Bocquin.”

“Well, I followed the scent to the Barrière de l’Étoile, where I learned that one cabriolet passed towards the Bois de Boulogne, and returned in about half an hour. As the pace was a sharp one, I guessed they could not have gone far, and so I turned into the wood at the first road to the right, where there is least recourse of people, and, by Jove! I was all correct. There, in a small open space between the trees, I saw the marks of recent footsteps, and a little farther on — found the grass all covered with blood —”

“Monsieur Bocquin! Monsieur Bocquin! the *commissaire* wants you,” cried a voice from the landing of the stair; and with an apology for leaving thus suddenly, he turned away. We followed, however, curious to hear the remainder of this singular history; and, after some difficulty, succeeded in gaining admittance to a small room, now densely crowded with people, the most of whom were of the very lowest class. The *commissaire* speedily made place for us beside him on the bench; for, like every one else in any conspicuous position, he also was an acquaintance of Duchesne.

While the *commissaire* conversed with Bocquin in a low tone, we had time to observe the *salle* and its occupants. Except the witnesses, two or three of whom were respectable persons, they were the squalid-looking, ragged wretches of the quarter, listening with the

greedy appetite of crime to any tale of bloodshed. The surgeon, who had just returned from visiting the wounded man, was waiting to be examined. To him now the *commissaire* directed his attention. It appeared that the wound was by no means of the dangerous character described, being merely through the fleshy portion of the neck, without injuring any part of importance. Having described circumstantially the extent of the injury, and its probable cause, he replied to a question of the *commissaire*, that no entreaty could persuade the wounded man to give any explanation of the occurrence, nor mention the name of his adversary. Duchesne paid little apparent attention to the evidence, and before it was concluded, asked me if I were satisfied with my police experience, and disposed to move away. Just at this moment there was a stir among the people around the door, and we heard the officers of the court cry out — “Room! make way there!” and the same moment General Duroc entered, accompanied by an aid-de-camp. He had been sent specially by the Emperor to ascertain what progress the investigation had made. His Majesty had determined to push the inquiry to its utmost limits. The general appeared dissatisfied with the little prospect there appeared of elucidation; and, turning to Duchesne, remarked —

“This is peculiarly ill-timed just now, as negociations are pending with Russia, and the prince’s family are about the person of the Czar.”

“But as the wound would seem of little consequence, in a few days, perhaps, the whole thing may blow over,” said Duchesne.

“It is for that very reason,” replied Duroc, earnestly, “that we are pressed for time. The object is to mark

the sentiments of his Majesty, *now*. Should the prince be once pronounced out of danger, it will be too late for sympathy."

"Oh! I perceive," said Duchesne, smiling; "your observation is most just. If my friends here, however, cannot put you on the track, I fear you have little to hope for elsewhere."

"I am aware of that, and Monsieur Cauchois knows the great reliance his Majesty reposes in his skill and activity."

Monsieur Cauchois, the *commissaire*, bowed with a most respectful air at the compliment, probably of all others the highest that could be paid him.

"A brilliant soirée we had last evening, Duchesne," said the general. "I hope this unhappy affair will not close that house at present. You are aware the prince is the suitor of Mademoiselle?"

"I only suspected as much," said the chevalier, with a peculiar smile. "It was my first evening there."

As General Duroc addressed a few words in a low tone to the *commissaire*, the man called Bocquin approached the bench, and handed up a small slip of paper to Duchesne. The chevalier opened it, and having thrown his eyes over it, passed it into my hand. All I could see were two words, written coarsely with the pencil — "How much?"

The chevalier turned the back of the paper, and wrote — "Fifty Napoleons."

On reading which the large man tore the scrap, and nodding slightly with his head, sauntered from the room. We rose a few moments after, and having taken a formal leave of the general and the *commissaire*, proceeded towards the street, where we had left our horses.

As we passed along the corridor, however, we found Bocquin awaiting us. He opened a door into a small mean-looking apartment, of which he appeared the owner. Having ushered us in, and cautiously closed it behind him, he drew from his pocket a piece of cloth, to which a button and a piece of gold embroidery were attached.

"Your jacket would be spoiled without this morsel, Captain," said he, laughing in a low dry laugh.

"So it would, Bocquin," said Duchesne, examining his coat, which I now perceived was torn on the shoulder, and a small piece, the exact one in his hand, wanting, but which had escaped my attention from the mass of gold lace and embroidery with which it was covered.

"Do you know, Bocquin," said Duchesne, in a tone much graver than he had used before, "I never noticed that."

"*Parbleu!* I believe you," said he, laughing; "nor did I, till you sat on the bench; when I was so pleased with your coolness, I could not, for the life of me, interrupt you."

"Have you got any money, Burke?" said the chevalier; "some twenty gold pieces" —

"No, no, Captain," said Bocquin, "not now — another time. I must call upon you one of these mornings about another affair, and it will be time enough then."

"As you please, Bocquin," said the chevalier, putting up his purse again: "and so, till we meet."

"Till we meet, gentlemen," replied the other, as he bowed us respectfully to the door.

"You seem to have but a very faint comprehension of all this, Burke," said Duchesne, as he took my arm, "You look confoundedly puzzled, I must say."

"If I didn't, I should be an admirable actor — that's all," said I.

"Why, I think the thing is plain enough, in all conscience; Bocquin found that piece of my jacket on the ground, and, of course, the affair was in his hands."

"Why, do you mean to say —"

"That I shot Monsieur le Prince — this morning, at a quarter past seven o'clock — and felt devilish uncomfortable about it, till the last ten minutes, my boy. If I did not confide the matter to you before, it was because that until all chance of detection was past, I could not expose you to the risk of an examination before the *préfet de police*. Happily now these dangers are all over. Bocquin is too clever a fellow, not to throw all the other spies on a wrong scent, so that we need have no fear of the result." I could scarcely credit the evidence of my senses, at the coolness and duplicity of the chevalier throughout an affair of such imminent risk, nor was I less astonished at the account he gave me of the whole proceeding.

One word, on leaving the *soirée*, had decided there should be a meeting the following day; and as the Russian well knew the danger of his adversary from the law, which was recently passed regarding prisoners on parole, he proposed they should meet, without seconds on either side. Duchesne acceded; and it was arranged, that the chevalier should drive along the Rue de Rivoli, at seven the next morning, where the Russian would join him, and they should drive together to the Bois de Boulogne.

"To do my Cossack, justice," said Duchesne, "he behaved admirably throughout the whole affair; and on taking his place beside me in the cab, entered into con-

versation freely and easily on the topics of the day. We chatted of the campaign — of the cavalry — of the Russian service — their size and equipment, only needing a higher organization to make them first-rate troops. We spoke of the Emperor Alexander, of whom he was evidently proud, and much pleased to hear the favourable opinion Napoleon entertained of his ability, and capacity; and it was in the middle of an anecdote about Savary and the Czar, we arrived at the Bois de Boulogne.

“I need not tell you the details of the affair, save that we loaded our own pistols, and stepped the ground ourselves. They were like other things of the same sort — the first shot concluded the matter. I aimed at his shoulder, but the pistol threw high. As to his bullet, it was only a while ago I knew it went so near me. It was nervous work, passing the barrier; for had he not made an effort to sit up straight in the cap, the sentry might have detained and examined us. All that you heard about his being left at his own door, covered with blood, and fainting, I need not tell you, has no truth. I never left the spot till the door was opened, and I saw him in the hands of a servant. Of course I concealed my face, and then drove off, at full speed.”

By this time we arrived at the Luxembourg, and Duchesne, with all the coolness in the world, joined a knot of persons engaged in discussing the duel, and endeavouring, by sundry clever and ingenious explanations, to account for the circumstance.

As I sauntered along to my quarters, I pondered over the adventure, and the character of the chevalier; and however I might turn the matter in my mind, one thought was ever uppermost — a sincere wish that I had not been made his confidant in the secret.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The return of the wounded.

A FEW mornings after this occurrence, when, as Duchesne himself prophesied, all memory of it was completely forgotten, the *ordre du jour* from the Tuileries commanded all the troops, then garrisoned in Paris, to be under arms, at an early hour, in the Champs Elysées, when the Emperor would pass them in review. The spectacle had, however, another object, which was not generally known. The convoys of the wounded from Austerlitz were that same day to arrive at Paris, and the display of troops was intended at once to honour this *entrée*, and give to the sad procession of the maimed and dying, the semblance of a triumph. Such were the artful devices which ever ministered to the deceit of the nation, and suffered them to look on but one side of their glory.

As I anticipated, the chevalier was greatly out of temper at the whole of this proceeding. He detested nothing more than those military displays which are got up for the populace; he despised the exhibition of troops to the vulgar and unmeaning criticism of tailors and barbers; and, more than all, he shrunk from the companionship of the national guard of Paris — those shop-keeping soldiers, with their umbrellas and spectacles, who figured with such pride on these occasions.

“Another affair like this,” said he, passionately, “and I’d resign my commission. A procession at the Porte St. Martin — the *bœuf gras* on Easter Monday — I’m your man for either; but to sit bolt upright on your saddle for three, maybe, four hours — to be stared at by every Bourgeois from the Rue de Bac —

to be pointed at with pink parasols — and compared with some ribbon-vender of the Boulevards. Par St. Louis! I can't even bear to think of it. Look yonder," said he, pointing to the court of the palace, where already a regiment was drawn up, under arms, and passing in inspection before the colonel. "There begins the dress-rehearsal already. His Majesty says midday — the generals of division draw out their men at eleven o'clock — the colonels take a look at their corps at ten — the *chefs de bataillon* at nine — and, *parbleu!* the corporals are at work by day-break. Then, what confounded drilling and dressing up, as if Napoleon could detect the slightest waving of the line over two leagues of ground; while you see the luckless adjutants flying hither, and thither, cursing, imprecating, and threatening, and hastily reiterating at the head of each company — 'Remember, men — be sure to remember — that when the drums beat to arms, you shout — "Vive l'Empereur!"' Rely upon it, Burke, if we had but one half of these preparations before a battle, we'd not be the dangerous fellows those Russians and Austrians think us."

"Come, come," said I, "you shall not persuade me, that the soldiers feel no pride on these occasions. The same men who fight so valiantly for their Emperor" —

"Stop there, I beg of you," said he, bursting into a fit of laughter. "I must really cry halt now. So long as you live, my dear friend, let nothing induce you to repeat that worn cant — Fight for their Emperor! why, they fought as bravely for Turenne, and Villars, and Maréchal Saxe; they were as full of courage under Moreau, and Kleber, and Dessaix, and Hoche; ay, and

will be again, when the Emperor is no more; and, heaven knows who stands in his place. The genius of a French army is fighting, not for gain, nor plunder, nor even for glory, so much as for fighting itself; and he is the best man who gives them most of it. What reduced the reckless hordes of the revolution to habits of discipline and obedience, but the warlike spirit of their leaders, whose bravery they respected; and, think you, Napoleon himself does not feel this in his heart, and know the necessity of continual war, to feed the insatiable appetite of his followers. In a word, my friend," added he, in a tone of mock solemnity, "we are a great people, and nature intended us to be so, by giving us a language in which 'gloire' rhymes with 'victoire,' and 'Français' with 'succès;' and now for the march, for, I fancy, we are late enough already."

There are few sources of annoyance more poignant, than to discover any illusion we have long indulged in, assailed by the sneers and sarcasms of another, who assumes a tone of superior wisdom on the faith of a difference of opinion. The mass of our likings and dislikings find their way into our heart, more from impulse than reason, and when attacked, are scarcely defensible by any effort of the understanding. This very fact renders us more painfully alive to their preservation, and we shrink instinctively from any discussion of them. While such is the case, we feel more bitterly the cruelty of him, who out of mere wantonness, can sport with the sources of our happiness, and assail the hidden stores of so many of our pleasures, for, unhappily, the mockery once listened to, lies associated with the idea for ever.

Already had Duchesne stripped me of more than

one delusion, and made me feel, that I was but indulging in a deceptive happiness in my dream of life; and often did I regret that I ever knew him. It is not enough to feel the sophistry of one's adversary — you should be able to detect and expose it, otherwise the triumphant tone he assumes gives an air of victory, which ends by imposing on yourself; and of this, I felt now convinced in my own case.

These thoughts rendered me silent, as we wended our way towards the Tuilleries, where the various officers of the staff, and the corps d'Élite were assembled. Here we found several of the marshals in waiting for the Emperor, while the Mameluke guard, in all the splendour of its gay equipments, stood around the great entrance of the palace. Many handsome equipages were also there — one conspicuous above the rest, for its livery of white and gold, with four outriders, belonged to Madame Murat, the grand Duchess of Berg, whose taste for splendour and show extended to every department of her household.

At last there was a movement in those nearest the palace: the drums beat to arms; the guard within the vestibule presented, and the Emperor appeared, followed by a brilliant staff. He stood for a few seconds on the steps — his hands clasped behind his back, and his head a little bent forwards, as if in thought — then drawing himself up, he looked with a gaze of proud composure on the crowd that filled the court of the palace, and where now all was silent and still. Never before had I remarked the same imperious expression of his features; but as his eye ranged over the brilliant array, now, I could read the innate consciousness of superiority in which he excelled. Ney, Murat, Victor,

Bessières — how little seemed they all before that mighty genius, whose glory they but reflected.

Oh! how lightly, then, did I deem the mocking jests of Duchesne, or all that his spirit of sarcasm could invent. There, stood the conqueror of Italy and Egypt — the victor of Marengo and Austerlitz, looking every inch a monarch and a soldier. Whether from thoughtless inattention, or studied affectation, I cannot say, but at that moment, when all stood in respectful silence before the Emperor, Duchesne had approached the grille of the palace — next the place de Carrousel, and was busily chatting with a pretty-looking girl, who, with a number of others, sat in a hired *calèche*. A hearty burst of laughter at something he said, rang through the court, and turned every eye in that direction. In an instant the Emperor's eagle glance pierced the distance, and fastened on the Chevalier, who, seated carelessly on one side of his saddle, paid no attention to what was going forward, when suddenly an aid-de-camp touched him on the arm, and said —

“Monsieur Le Capitaine Duchesne, his Majesty the Emperor would speak with you.”

Duchesne turned — a faint, a very faint flush covered his cheek, and, putting spurs to his horse, he galloped up to the front of the terrace, where the Emperor was standing. From the distance at which I stood, to hear what passed was impossible; but I watched, with a most painful interest, the scene before me.

The Emperor's attitude was unchanged, as the Chevalier rode up; and when Duchesne himself seemed to listen with a respectful manner to the words of his Majesty, I could see, by his easy bearing, that his self-possession had never deserted him. The interview lasted

not many minutes, when the Emperor waved his hand haughtily, and the Chevalier, saluting with his sabre, backed his horse some paces, and then, wheeling round, rapidly galloped towards the gate, through which he passed.

"This evening, then, Mademoiselle," said he with a smile, "I hope to have the honour —," and, with a courteous bow, rode on towards the arch-way opening on the quay.

"What has happened?" said I eagerly, to the officer at my side.

He shook his head, as if doubtful, and half fearing even to whisper at the moment.

"His privilege of the *élite* is withdrawn, Sir," said an old general officer. "He must leave Paris to join his regiment in twenty-four hours."

"Poor fellow!" muttered I half-aloud, when a savage frown from the veteran officer corrected my words.

"What, Sir!" said he in a low voice, where every word was thickened to a guttural sound. "What, Sir! is the court of the Tuilleries no more than a canteen or a bivouack? *Par dieu*, if it was not for his laced jacket he had been degraded to the ranks — ay, and deserved it too."

The coarse accents and underbred tone of the speaker showed me at once that he was one of the old generals of the republican army, who never could endure the descendants of aristocratic families in the service, and were too willing always to attribute to insolence and premeditated affront even the slightest breaches of military etiquette. Meanwhile the Emperor mounted, and accompanied by the officers of his staff, rode forward towards the Champs Elysées, while all of lesser note followed at a distance.

From the garden of the Tuilleries to the Barrier de l'Étoile, the troops were ranged in four lines, the cavalry of the guard and the artillery forming the ranks along the road by which the convoy must pass. It was a bright day, with a clear, frosty atmosphere and a blue sky, and well suited the brilliant spectacle.

Scarcely had the Emperor issued from the Tuilleries when ten thousand shouts of "Vive l'Empereur," rent the air — the cannon of the Invalides thundered forth at the same moment, and the crash of the military bands added their loud clangor to the sounds of joy. He rode slowly along the line, stopping frequently to speak with some of the soldiers, and giving orders to his suite concerning them. Of the officers in his staff that day, the greater number had been wounded at Austerlitz, and still bore the traces of their injuries. Rapp displayed a tremendous scar from a sabre across his cheek — Sebastiani wore his sword-arm in a sling — and Friant, unable to mount his horse, followed the Emperor on foot, leaning on a stick, and walking with great difficulty.

The sight of these brave men, whose devotion to Napoleon had been proved on so many battle-fields added to the interest of the scene, and tended to excite popular enthusiasm to its utmost; but on Napoleon, still, all eyes were bent. The general, who led their armies to victory — the monarch, who raised France to the proudest place among the nations — was there, within a few paces of them. Each word he spoke was sinking deeply into some heart, prouder of that moment than of rank or riches.

So slow was the Emperor's progress along the ranks, that it was near three o'clock before he had arrived at

the extremity of the line. The cavalry were now ordered to form in squadrons, and move past in close order. While this movement was effecting, a cannon-shot at the barrier announced the approach of the convoy. The cavalry were halted in line once more, and the same moment the first waggon of the train appeared above the summit of the hill. So secretly had the whole been managed, that none, save the officers of the various staffs, knew what was coming. While each look was turned then towards the barrier in astonishment, gradually the waggon rolled on, another followed, and another. These were, however, but the ambulances of the hospitals, and now the wounded themselves came in sight, a white flag — that well-known signal — waving in front of each waggon, while a guard of honour, consisting of picked men of the different regiments, rode at either side. One loud cheer — a shout echoed back from the Tuilleries itself — rung out, as the soldiers saw their brave companions restored to them once more. With that impulse which, even in discipline, French soldiers never forget, the men rushed forward to the waggons, and in a moment officers and men were in the arms of their comrades. What a scene it was, to see the poor and wasted forms, mangled by shot, and maimed of limb, brightening up again, as home and friends surrounded them — to hear their faint voices mingle with the questions for this one, or for that, while the fate of some brave fellow met but one word in elegy. On they passed — a sad train, but full of glorious memories. There, were the grenadiers of Oudinot, who carried the Russian centre; eleven waggons are filled with their wounded. Here come the voltigeurs of Bernadotte's brigade. See how the

fellows preserve their ancient repute — cheering and laughing — ever the same, whether roistering at midnight in the Faubourg St. Antoine, or rushing madly upon the ranks of the enemy. There, are the dragoons of Nansouty, who charged the imperial guard of Russia. See the proud line that floats on their banner — “All wounded by the sabre.” And here, come the cuirassiers of the guard, with a detachment of their own, as escort. How splendidly they look in the bright sun, and how proudly they come. As I looked, the Emperor rode forward, bare-headed, his whole staff uncovered. “*Chapeau bas*, Messieurs,” said he, in a loud voice — “honour to the brave in misfortune!” Just then the escort halted, and I heard a laugh in front, close to where the Emperor was standing; but from the crowded staff around him, could not see what was going forward.

“What is it?” said I, curious to learn the least incident of the scene.

“Advance a pace or two, Captain,” said the young officer I addressed, “you can see it all.” I did so, and then beheld — oh! with what delight and surprise — my poor friend Pioche seated on the driving-seat of a gun, with his hand in salute, as the Emperor spoke to him.

“Thou wilt not have promotion, nor a pension — what, then, can I do for thee?” said Napoleon, smiling. “Hast any friend in the service whom I could advance for thy sake?”

“Yes, *parbleu!*” said Pioche, scratching his forehead, with a sort of puzzle and confusion, even the Emperor smiled at, “I have a friend; but mayhap those wouldn’t like —”

“Ask me for nothing — thou thinkest I could not — ought not to grant,” said the Emperor sternly. “What is ’t now?”

The poor corporal seemed thoroughly nonplussed, and for a second or two could not reply. At last, as if summoning all his courage for the effort, he said — “Well, thou canst but refuse, and then the fault will be all thine; she is a brave girl, and had she been a man —”

“Whom can he mean?” said Napoleon. “Is the man’s head wandering?”

“No, *mon général* — all right there — that shell has turned many a sabre’s edge. I was talking of Minette, the vivandière of ours. If thou are so bent on doing me a service, why, promote *her*, and thou’lt make the whole regiment proud of it.”

This speech was lost in the laugh, which, beginning with the Emperor, extended to the staff, and at last to all the bystanders.

“Dost wish I should make her one of my aid-de-camps?” said Napoleon, still laughing.

“*Parbleu!* thou hast more ill-favoured ones among them,” said Pioche, with a significant look at the grim faces of Rapp and Daru, whose hard and weather-beaten features never deigned a smile, while every other face was moved in laughter.

“But thou hast not said, yet, what I am to do,” rejoined the Emperor.

“Thou used not to be so hard to understand,” grumbled out Pioche. “I have seen the time thou’d have said — ‘Is it Minette that was wounded at the Adige? — is that the girl stood in the square at Marengo? *Parbleu!* — I’ll give her the cross of the Legion.’”

“And she shall have it, Corporal Pioche,” said Napoleon, as he detached the decoration he wore on the breast of his coat. “Give the order for the Vivandière to advance.”

Scarce were the words spoken, when the sound of a horse pressed to his speed was heard, and mounted upon a small, but showy Arab, a present from the regiment, Minette rode up. In the bloom of health, and flushed by exercise, and the excitement of the moment, I never saw her look so handsome. Reining in her horse short, as she came in front of the Emperor, the animal reared up, almost straight, and pawed the air with his fore-legs, while she, with all the composure in life, raised her hand to her cap, and saluted the Emperor, with an action the most easy and graceful.

"Thou hast some yonder," said Pioche, with a grim smile at the staff, "would be sore puzzled to keep their saddles as well."

"Minette," said the Emperor, while he gazed on her handsome features with evident pleasure, "your name is well known to me, for many actions of kindness and self-devotion; wear this cross of the Legion of Honour; you will not value it the less, that, until now, it has been only worn by me. Whenever you find one worthy to be your husband, Minette, I will charge myself with the dowry."

"Oh, Sire," said the trembling girl, as she pressed the Emperor's fingers to her lips — "oh, Sire, is this real?"

"Yes, *parbleu!*" said Pioche wiping a large tear from his eye, as he spoke — "he can make thee be a man, and make me feel like a girl." As Duroc attached the cross to the button-hole of the Vivandière's frock, she sat pale as death, totally overcome by her sensations of pride, and unable to say more than, "Oh, Sire!" which she repeated three or four times at intervals.

Again the procession moved on; other waggons followed with their brave fellows; but all the interest

of the scene was now, for me at least, wrapped up in that one incident, and I took but little notice of the rest.

For full two hours the cortege continued to roll on — waggon after waggon, filled with the shattered remnants of an army: yet such was the indomitable spirit of the people — such the heartfelt passion for glory — all deemed that procession the proudest triumph of their arms. Nor was this feeling confined to the spectators; the wounded themselves leaned eagerly over the sides of the charrettes, to gaze into the crowds on either side, seeking some old familiar face, and looking, through all their sufferings, proudly, on the dense mob beneath them. Some tried to cheer, and waved their powerless hands; but others, faint and heart-sick, turned their glazed eyes towards the “Invalides,” whose lofty dome appeared above the trees, as though to say, that, was now their resting-place — the only one before the grave.

He who witnessed that day, could have little doubt about the guiding spirit of the French nation; nor could he distrust their willingness to sacrifice any thing — nay, all — to national glory.

Suffering and misery — wounds, ghastly and dreadful, were on every side; and yet, not one word of pity — not a look of compassion was there. These men were, in *their* eyes, far too highly placed for sympathy: theirs was that path to which all aspired; and their trophies were their own worn frames and mangled bodies.

And then, how they brightened up, as the Emperor would draw near — how even the faintest would strive to catch his eye, and gaze with parted lips on him as he spoke, as though drinking in his very words — the balm to their bruised hearts; and the faint cry of

"*L'Empereur! L'Empereur!*" passed like a murmur along the line.

Not until the last waggon had defiled before him, did the Emperor leave the ground. It was then nearly dark, and already the lamps were lighted along the quays, and the windows of the Palace displayed the brilliant lustre of the preparations for a grand dinner to the Marshals.

As we moved slowly along in close order, I found myself among a group of officers of the Emperor's staff, eagerly discussing the day and its events.

"I am sorry for Duchesne," said one, "with all his impertinences, and he had enough of them; he was a brave fellow, and a glorious leader at a moment of difficulty."

"Well, well, the Emperor has, perhaps, forgiven him by this time; it is not likely he would mar the happiness of a day like this, by disgracing an officer of the '*Élite*.'"

"You are wrong, my friend; his Majesty is not sorry for the occasion, which can prove that he knows as well how to punish as to reward. Duchesne's fate is sealed. You are not old enough to remember, as I can, the morning at Lonado, where the same *ordre du jour* conferred a mark of honour on one brother, and condemned another to be shot."

"And was this indeed, the case?"

"Ay, was it. Many can tell you of it, as well as myself. They were both in the same regiment — the fifteenth demi-brigade of light infantry. They held a chateau, at Salo, against the enemy for eight hours, when, at length, the elder, who commanded at the front, capitulated, and laid down his arms: the younger refused to comply, and continued the fight. They were reinforced, an hour afterwards, and the Austrians

beaten off. The day after, they were both tried, and the result was as I have told you — the utmost favour the younger could obtain, was, not to witness the execution of his brother.”

As I heard this story, my very blood curdled in my veins, and I looked with a kind of dread on him who now rode a few paces in front of me — the stern and pitiless Napoleon.

At last we entered the court of the Tuilleries, when the Emperor, dismissing his staff, entered the palace, and we separated, to follow our own plans for the evening. For a moment or two I remained uncertain which way to turn. I wished much to see Duchesne, yet scarcely hoped to meet with him, by returning to the Luxembourg. It was not the time to be away from him, at a moment like this, and I resolved to seek him out.

For above an hour I went from café to café, where he was in the habit of resorting, but to no purpose. He had not been seen in any of them during the day, so that at length I turned homeward, with the faint hope that I should see him there on my arrival.

Somehow, I never had felt more sad and depressed; and the events of the day, so far from making me participate in the general joy, had left me gloomy and desponding. My spirit was little in harmony with the gay and merry groups that passed along the streets, chanting their campaigning songs, and usually having some old soldier of the “guard” amongst them; for they felt it as a fête, and were hurrying to the “cabarets,” to celebrate the day of Austerlitz.

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